

THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE

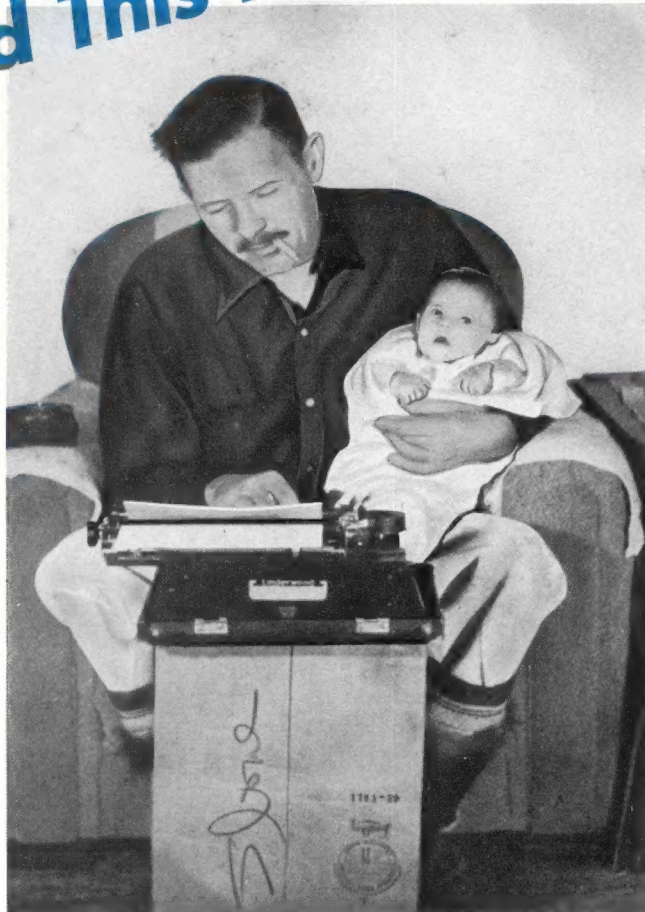
Bluebook¹

25c
SEPTEMBER



Forest Fire! - page 8

How Did This Happen To Me?



Minding one infant is no distraction to this dogged gentleman as he knocks out a bit of prose. After all, he usually has 11 tots surging over him with saws and lollipops. To read what he's writing, turn to page 78.

Bluebook

SEPTEMBER, 1954 Vol. 99, No. 5

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The short stories and novel herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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POLITICS IS PEOPLE

By Robert Bendiner

CONGRESS HAS sponsored only two big television shows so far—"What's My Crime?" with Senator Kefauver and Frank Costello, and "Half-Truth or Consequences," which featured an all-star cast and ran through most of the Spring season. But the results have been so impressive in terms of political ambition that some shrewd Congressmen are still pondering an important side-issue of those affairs: What can TV really do for an ambitious politician?



Look at the score. Overnight Estes Kefauver, a freshman Senator, became a top Presidential candidate. His committee counsel, the hitherto unknown Rudolph Halley, shot across the political horizon of New York and made a respectable race for the mayoralty even without the backing of a major party. Senator Symington, who played a leading role in the Army-McCarthy show, is now rated a serious contender for the next Democratic nomination for President. And within a week from the time he became committee counsel in the same production, Ray Jenkins, a politically obscure Knoxville lawyer, was being boomed as the Republican choice to replace Kefauver in the Senate.

Will Congress turn itself into a permanent producer of "Talent Scouts"? Some of its members—notably Kefauver himself and New York's Representative Javits—hope so. They would have Congressional activity on the air as a regular feature.

But others—especially Sam Rayburn, the House minority leader, and Senator Gillette of Iowa are not so sure. There are more than 30 Congressional committees, not to mention the proceedings of the two Houses themselves, and somebody would have to decide what would go under the Klieg lights on any given day. Understandably, that's a power that nobody wants to

entrust to a partisan presiding officer or even to a majority vote.

Hopeful members needn't be disappointed, though. If too many people got into the act, the appeal would fade. And once the point of diminishing returns was reached, a televised Senator might be painfully embarrassed to find his Hooper rating lower than Rootie Kazootie's.

NOT SO LONG ago a top Soviet official accused Secretary of State Dulles of making policy while "drunk with rage and fury." Time was when that sort of thing was fighting talk, but now it hardly raises an Ambassador's eyebrow—which shows how diplomacy has degenerated or improved, depending on how you look at it.

In the old days diplomacy was a mysterious business, conducted by frosty gentlemen in cut-aways, pepper-and-salt trousers, and elegant accents. These professional smoothies talked in a jargon so restrained that a dozen nations could be plunged into war without anyone ever using a rougher phrase than "unfriendly act." In fact, they were still clicking heels and sending mash notes that wound up, "With renewed assurances of my inexhaustible esteem for your Exalted Highness, I remain, your most obliging servant"—right up to the minute their troops went goose-stepping over the border.

It's all very different today. You have only to flip on your radio and listen to the frank and



honest eloquence of the barrooms as it flows out from the councils of the nations. Close your eyes and it's pretty hard to tell whether you're tuned into the Security Council of the UN or a wrestling bout at the local armory. This is known as "Open Diplomacy Openly Arrived At."

For a while it looked like an improvement.

Did away with a lot hypocrisy, people said, and let everyone know what the score was. But maybe the old-timers were right after all. The language of international discourse has grown simpler, but to understand what's happening you still have to know the code. The only difference is that in place of flattery, you now have to appreciate the varying degrees of insult.

Thus when a delegate to the UN calls another member a "zombie," for example, he is merely serving notice that relations between their two powers are beginning to cool. When one refers to the Soviet representative as a "descendant of Genghis Khan," he is merely showing his government's determination to hold out this time for a real concession in whatever bargaining is going on. And when the Russians call anyone a "cannibal," or a "bloodthirsty imperialist," they mean only that they intend to go on badgering the "cannibal's" government until they get word from Moscow that the line has changed.

When a bomb falls on your head, of course, you may infer, as under the old code, that war is imminent.

* * *

Wind Over Washington

(from the Congressional Record)

REP. HOFFMAN (R., Mich.) *blows hot and cold in the same speech on the subject of our northern neighbor:* I do not think too much of the Canadians just at the moment. In former years I used to go up there and I got 10 cents on every dollar I spent . . . Last year I ran a little short and those credulous people cashed a check for \$100 for me to cover expenses, but they took out \$5. I did not like that. They had been paying me 10 cents the other way, but when it cost me 5 cents it was different . . . But I love the Canadians. They apparently have more sense than have we, they have at least twice reduced their tax rate recently. . . .

* * *

SENATOR CARLSON (R., Kans.) *attempts to vary the mood of a colleague's music:* I wonder if the distinguished Senator from Illinois would permit a little optimism in the note of gloom he seems to be spreading?

SENATOR DOUGLAS (D., Ill.): Certainly, but I would suggest that if the Senator wishes to create optimism, let him spray it at the end of my speech, rather than play a flute obbligato on my main theme.

PRO and CON



Car Insurance Controversy

Mr. Margolius is one of the very few lay writers on automobile insurance who has fully grasped the fact that there is a wide difference in what a person may pay in the way of automobile insurance premiums, depending upon his selection of companies. I think he has performed a public service in spreading this information.

I hope you have braced yourself for the onslaught of critical letters which you will receive. You should take comfort in the fact that our economy is based on price competition under a private enterprise system.

Thomas C. Morrill, *Vice President*
State Farm Mutual Auto Ins. Co.
Bloomington, Ill.

The lead article on "How to Save on Your Car Insurance" certainly was a mish-mash of half truths, old wives tales and plain hokum. Over 50 per cent of the companies the writer, Mr. Margolius, recommends, do not even qualify by his own tests of dependability (e.g., licensing in New York, Massachusetts and Illinois).

Who is kidding whom?

Chandler G. Ketchum,
Babb & Company (insurance)
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Mr. Margolius thinks you're kidding him. The article does not state that each of the companies meets every test precisely. The matter of licensing wasn't offered as a decisive test, but merely as added assurance of the dependability of a company.—Ed.

I would like Mr. Margolius to write to the Texas Supreme Court for its ruling on non-assessable mutuals. I'm afraid he'll find that, according to this law body, there is no such animal. A mutual is a mutual and you cannot change that by calling it something else. It cannot make its policies non-assessable by just saying they will not be assessed.

M. G. Malek,
Aetna Insurance Co.
Baker, Mont.

Says Mr. Margolius: "The Texas Court of Civil Appeals has reaffirmed that non-assessable poli-

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cies are truly non-assessable. In other words, you can't be assessed for any more money than your premium."

Wrangler Wrangle

Deplorable are the generalizations by Edwin V. Burkholder ("The Cowboy Who Never Lived") in your June issue.

Having acquired my first posterior calluses in 1886 and having stuck around, or tried to, on top of horses until past the turn of the century, my memories and my knowledge prove him wrong.

"His [the cowboy's] hat cost him two or three months' salary." Drivell!

"He never bought [his boots] from a store." More drivell!

Please get E.V.B. and your editors back on the trail.

J. Clyde McIntyre, Flint, Mich.

Ed. Burkholder suggests Mr. McIntyre get back on the trail himself. Says Ed: "Just to double-check my own memory of cowboy life, I looked up what Bruce Grant, the greatest authority on cowboys, had to say about hats and boots: 'Buying a hat was a long-time investment to the old-time cowboy, who would pay from two to six months' wages for one . . . The cowboy's boots were his pride and joy, as well as his safety-first. He insisted on boots being handmade and did not want store boots.'"

I remember cowboys from my boyhood days in the bluestem of Kansas and Oklahoma in the late 70's and early 80's. They weren't the class

of critter an ordinary hoe-pusher cared to fool with. And what you said about their dress and cleanliness was true, too. I can still smell them!

A. J. Bolinger, Versailles, Mo.

Eggbeater Boosts Morale

This command noted with pleasure and agreed wholeheartedly with your article on Joe "Mr. Helicopter" Mashman which appeared in the June issue.

Mr. Mashman was recently in the San Diego area with a Bell HTL-6 from the factory at Fort Worth, Texas, and performed the very great service of taking up many dependents of personnel attached to this squadron.

Since dependents normally are not permitted to ride in Navy aircraft, this was the first helicopter ride for most if not all of them. The value in increased morale for the squadron personnel, their wives and children was inestimable.

Comdr. E. F. Hayes, Commanding Officer
Helicopter Squadron One
U.S. Pacific Fleet Air Force

Complaint Dept.

What's ailing you guys?

We don't buy BLUEBOOK to find out about insurance, the milkman, outboard motors, the man around the house, Joe Helicopter, Plotnikov's car or travel bargains.

I suppose next you'll be telling us what to wear while eating hot takes or how to get out of jail in three easy lessons.

E. D. Loes, Los Angeles, Calif.

Simple: (1) maple syrup; (2) don't get in.—Ed.

Backpat Dept.

May I compliment you and your staff on a splendid magazine. Dick Reddy's article on "How to Have Children and Live" is nothing short of terrific.

Your entire publication, fiction and articles, make it the best buy of its type on the magazine stand today.

Earle E. Linscott, Walnut Creek, Calif.

Local Color

To my mind "The Fifth Assault," by Tom Ferris, is a classic. He must live in the Miami area, for his description of the Florida coast is, to say the least, superb.

R. J. Baxter, Miami, Fla.

Good guess. He lives in Pompano Beach, about 30 miles north of Miami.—Ed.



WHAT SECRET POWER DID THIS MAN POSSESS?



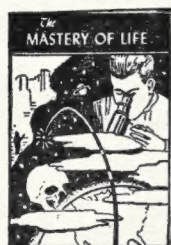
Benjamin Franklin
(A Rosicrucian)

WHY was this man great? How does anyone—man or woman—achieve greatness? Is it not by mastery of the powers within ourselves?

Know the mysterious world within you! Attune yourself to the wisdom of the ages! Grasp the inner power of your mind! Learn the secrets of a full and peaceful life! Benjamin Franklin—like many other learned and great men and women—was a Rosicrucian. The Rosicrucians (NOT a religious organization) first came to America in 1694. Today, headquarters of the Rosicrucians send over seven million pieces of mail annually to all parts of the world.

The Rosicrucians

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Editor's Note:

We have a letter from Major Philip N. Pierce of the Marine Corps, in which he beats us about the ears, in eloquent Biblical language, for cutting down on the amount of fiction in BLUEBOOK.

Wrote the major, "Then it came to pass the issue of June in the year of Our Lord 1954, and the articles and features were 15 and the fiction was but six. And there was a great wailing and much sadness among the ranks of the faithful . . . *Sic transit gloria BLUEBOOK.*"

The mistake you made, Major, was in looking at the table of contents instead of counting pages. There were 71 pages of fiction to 57 pages of non-fiction in the June issue, a ratio of about 55 to 45 per cent. Admittedly a little low—because the lengths of the various items we wanted in the book happened to work out that way. In the July issue the ratio is roughly 66% fiction to 34% non; in August, about 60% fiction to 40% non-fiction. Which is just about the way BLUEBOOK has been for the last few years.

What we've been trying to do is to shorten up the articles—what our old City Editor used to call taking the wind out of them. That way we can give you a bigger variety—and hope that they'll be of greater practical value to more and more people.

We're still giving you more and better "men's" fiction than any other competitive magazine. Where else can you get three or four top-flight short stories, a novelette (when we can get good ones) plus a pocket-book-length novel, all for a quarter?

This seems to be the issue for off-beat writers. Henry Bunstein, who did "Fire!" on page 8, works for the U. S. Forest Service out in California, thus ought to know what he's talking about. He entered the service three years ago "as an antidote to too many cities," which, considering his past, is unexpected.

He was graduated from the University of Delaware in 1937, looked askance at a legal career, did some writing and put on one of those brown suits that Uncle Sam seemed to have lying around in the early Forties. Henry was a Pfc in the ETO for three years—"mostly working on newspapers and running PX's where the officers

took the lighters and graciously allowed the EM to have the matches." After the war he taught English for a while, collected some degrees and married "Michigan's prettiest daughter" in 1952.

Carl Dreher, whose article on insulating you'll find on page 74, probably wouldn't agree with Bunstein about the lighters, since he was a major in the Air Force from '42 to '45. And we've seldom been so impressed by a biography:

"... amateur wireless operator 1908; commercial operator, first grade, 1916; engineer for Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. of America, General Electric Co., Radio Corp. of America and National Broadcasting Co. 1917-1928; chief engineer, RCA Photophone 1928-1929; director of recording, RKO Studios 1929-1937. Writer since 1937."

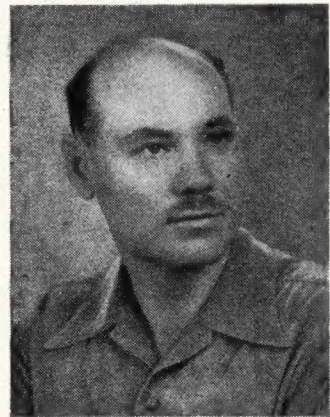
In recent years he's been getting a large charge, and respectable amounts of cash, out of buying beat-up early American and Colonial houses, restoring and remodeling them, and selling same. Since, for most of us, fixing up just one house is a great plenty, this makes him a man to be regarded with awe.

For some time we've been wanting to say a word about Vic Johnson, a number of whose stories you've seen, and we hope enjoyed, in these pages. His current one, on page 44, is a sea

Victor

H.

Johnson

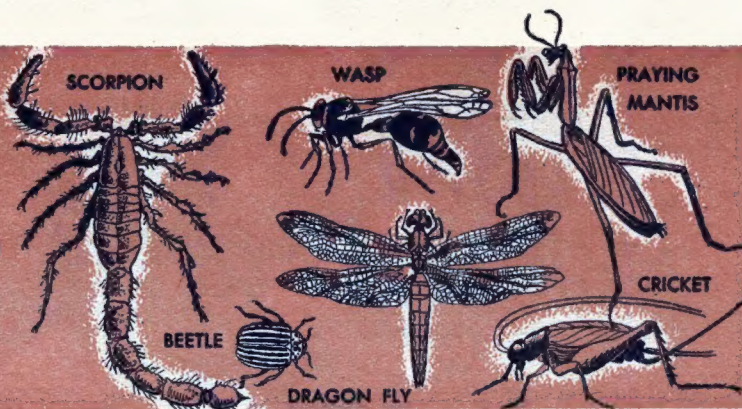


yarn, a subject Vic knows well since he's a chief engineer.

He made his first trip—to South America—before he was 17 and since then has been around the world four times, up and down and criss-cross. He's sailed in all kinds of ratings in the black gang, from coal-passer to chief. But, says Vic; he's "had some 40 magazine pieces and one book published—the latter came out while I was on a tanker in the Persian Gulf." He prefers the typewriter to the throttle, however, "largely because my wife and young daughter like to have Pop home."—A.F.

Read All About It...

By John T. Dunlavy
and John J. Ryan



INSECTS

ONE of the fiercest insects and one which will attack an animal as large as a cat or a dog is the praying mantis. It is also a cannibal, devouring its own kind. If hungry enough, a mantis will eat its own legs off. Immediately after mating, a female mantis devours the male—sometimes even before mating is completed. Yet a mantis will never attack an ant. Some entomologists believe this stems from the fact that ants prey on baby mantises, and the fear of ants carries through to adulthood. The mantis is the only insect that can turn its head like a man. Because it eats destructive insects it is a friend of the farmer and in some states it's against the law to harm a mantis. In ancient Greece the mantis was called The Prophet because of its prayer-like stance. In some countries mantises are kept as pets. In China they are matched as fighters with high bets on the contestants. In Japan they are tethered to bedposts to keep mosquitoes away. African tribes believe they have magical powers and can bring the dead to life. In France some believe a mantis sewed in a pocket will ward off toothaches. In parts of Europe they are considered a cure for chilblains. In 16th century England it was thought a mantis would, if asked, show a lost person the direction home by pointing one of its legs.

It is estimated there are about two billion insects per square mile, of which only 25 million are above ground. About 600,000 species of insects have been identified, but the U. S. Department of Agriculture estimates the number of species may total 10 million. A single apple-tree may contain 500 different species of insects.

INSECTS don't grow after they get wings, so small flies can't grow into large flies. . . . The poison of a black widow spider is deadlier than that of a rattlesnake. . . . Insect

blood is usually green or yellow. . . . Some insects can distinguish among colors, the bee among them, but the bee is blind to the color red. . . . A silkworm is not a worm; it's a caterpillar. A ladybug is not a bug but a beetle. A fish moth is not a moth but a silverfish, which in this case isn't a fish but wingless insect. . . . Crickets, like mantises, are matched and fought in China and also kept as musical pets. . . . The male mosquito cannot bite. . . . In the insect world most males are smaller, less fierce, and less aggressive than the female. . . . Bees fly at about 20 miles per hour.

MOST insects guide themselves by their antennae or sense of smell, rather than by their eyes. Insect eyes cannot turn or move. They are composed of an enormously complex system of individual lenses, 30,000 of them in the single eye of a dragonfly, for example. Many insects also have two or three simple eyes containing no lenses, but these only tell them the difference between light and dark. Butterflies have the greatest vision of all insects—up to eight or nine feet. Houseflies see about three feet; wasps and bees about two feet. In experiments, insects' eyes have been sealed without any unusual effect on their activities, but when their antennae were removed they were helpless.

INSECT is a term applied by entomologists to those creatures with no backbone which wear their skeletons outside their bodies, which have six jointed legs and usually two pairs of wings. The term *bug* refers only to members of the true bug family which includes stink bugs, chinch bugs and bedbugs. Insects and bugs have no intelligence, nor can they be taught anything. If they had intelligence they could, it's estimated, rule the earth in a

few days because of their tremendous ability to reproduce themselves. A pair of houseflies in four months could produce 191 quintillion descendants if none of them died or were killed by other insects.

THE strongest living thing in proportion to its size is the beetle. It can carry 850 times its own weight. Beetles are also the largest single order of insects known as there are more than 250,000 different species of them. Seven thousand years ago in early Egypt the beetle was considered sacred and a sign of immortality, which is why the beetle design was worked into so many ancient pieces of jewelry and sculpture.

WASPS are considered the best builders among insects. In the U. S., wasp cities may be two feet long, but in Ceylon they reach six feet in length and contain 40 "floors" where as many as 30,000 wasps live. These wasp nests are made from a form of paper the wasps manufacture by chewing slivers of wood into a pulp, wetting it, and spreading it into thin layers that dry. Some scientists believe man first learned how to make paper by observing wasps doing this.

It's estimated that one-tenth of everything raised in the United States is destroyed by insects. Annual farm loss is more than 1.5 billion dollars from insect damage. Yet only a few hundred of the hundreds of thousands of species of insects are hostile to man or his crops.

THE Department of Agriculture collects ladybugs and distributes hundreds of millions of them annually to help kill aphids—insects that destroy plants. On the West Coast two ounces of ladybugs are distributed per acre for this purpose. Ladybugs are believed a symbol of good crops in England and fine weather in Central Europe. In northern Europe some believe they help girls find husbands.



FIRE!

By HENRY L. BUNSTEIN

***When flames leap in the timber country,
it seems that only miracles can halt the inferno.
With shovels and prayers, the men of
the Forest Service perform them each week.***

THE FLAMES boiled up from the floor of the canyon. Fanned by the up-draft behind them they swept through the brown pine-needles and leaped furiously on the clumps of thick brush. The fire on the ground stabbed at the base of the trees and the exploding bushes sent flames high into the branches.

Searing heat and sparks reached out ahead of the flames to start new fires in the bone-dry

ground cover. Great masses of smoke swirled about, alternately obscuring the fire and lifting to reveal the blazing inferno.

For a moment I stopped my wild scramble down the slope to make a quick appraisal of what must be done and how to do it. Behind me my crew of 10 copper-skinned Pueblo Indians came to a sliding halt. I had my orders from Don Euler, the sector boss, to get down there and put

a line across the head of the fire as quickly as possible. We both doubted the fire could be stopped short of the top of the canyon, but that was no reason for not trying.

Right now the flames were coming fastest up the sloping ridge on which we stood; they were about 350 feet away and coming on faster all the time. We would have to work like the devil to hold it.

To the left of us I saw a large bare spot of rock and decided to use that to anchor one end of our line. I called to Del, the tall, handsome foreman of the crew, and told him to get his crew started there and to build straight across the ridge. The fewer curves or corners in a fire line the better, but there were some patches of brush I wanted left outside the line and I would have to make certain that Del went on the proper side of them.

The crew piled in. The first four men chopped at the brush with the axe blades of their Pulaskis and with the mattock edges took quick swipes at the needles that lay almost everywhere.



A fire is pinpointed by means of a scientific direction-finder by lookout Don Bloch.

Behind them the other six men scraped and shoveled at the ground, each man making only a few quick movements before moving a few feet forward. As they moved they left behind a clean two-foot line that went right down to the mineral earth, where there was nothing that could burn.

A glance at the slope above showed that the two men I had left up there had separated and were on the alert for any sparks that might fall on the unburned side of the line and start new fires.

Building a hot line is dirty, sweaty work. You must work as close to the fire as possible, so

you're always in heat and smoke. The heat irritates and makes you hurry, but it is the blinding, strangling smoke that is your real enemy.

It gets in your mouth and sears your throat. It gets up your nose and makes you long for fresh cool air as you never did before, and it gets in your eyes and blinds and burns.

But these Indians were veteran fire-fighters and knew the importance of getting that line in quickly and well. They knew that the sooner the line was in the sooner they could get out of there, and they worked like madmen.

Like a Blast Furnace

A great punky log lay across the path of our line. I led the crew in a great curve around it and had them make the line as wide as possible where the fire would come closest to it. On the hard, shale-covered ground, there was no dirt to throw on the log to keep it cool and protected from sparks. If it caught fire it would burn like a blast furnace, and would undoubtedly result in the loss of our line. I told the last man in the crew to stay and watch it and went back to my job of laying out the line.

The fire was burning nearer and the heat and smoke were getting worse. But the line was nearly completed now. Only a short distance ahead I could see another crew working toward us. We would link up in a few minutes. Then I could spread my men out along the line to look for spot fires.

I carried several fusees, hand torches that give out a very hot flame for about 20 minutes. As soon as the crew had finished, I would go back along the line with these and burn out the

Employing the most useful weapon of all, the shovel, two fire-fighters battle a blaze.



patches of needles and brush that touched the inside of the line.

Then it happened.

"Spot! Spot fire!" Everyone stopped and looked up. Few words are more dreaded in forest-fire fighting.

Forty feet above us the two men I had left on guard for spot fires were rushing toward an area of flame scarcely larger than a card table that had suddenly appeared in a patch of pine needles. But they were too late. As we watched, the fire jumped into a thicket of highly-inflammable chamiso and in a flash there was a small hell burning.

The line was lost. I knew that by the time the crew and I could climb even those few feet between us and the spot fire it would be far out of control. The main thing now was to get out of there before we were trapped.

"Let's go," I yelled. With a sweeping motion of his arm Del got the crew started up the slope.

Now the whole business of building the line had to be done again as soon as we got above the spot fire. The day before on a different sector of the fire we had lost five successive lines in less than two hours.

No matter what we did, the fire always seemed to come up with another knockout punch. It drove us before it like a dog worrying a flock of sheep. Every time we corralled it in one place it would break out in another.

Actually the line where we were trying to stop the fire was only one small part of a much greater whole. Four days ago a careless man had come into the Angeles National Forest and built a fire. Somehow it got away from him; by the time a fire crew could reach the scene, several acres were already burning.

Potential of Disaster

The Angeles National Forest covers more than half a million acres in the mountains that rise to the north of Los Angeles. It is a vital part of some of the most valuable watershed land in the world. Without the brush and the grass and the other ground cover on the slopes of those mountains, there would be nothing to stop the volumes of water that fall there at certain times of the year from rushing down upon the thickly populated centers below and causing incalculable damage. In the past this has happened, and thus the effects of even small burns have been felt for years after.

Now, 25,000 acres had already fallen to the fire we were fighting. And before it would be put out, the burned area would surpass 50,000 acres.

The whole fire line stretched for miles and more than 1900 chains of it were still out of control. It had burned down the slopes and out

through the canyons and had reached the desert to the north. There it had been stopped. But it was still burning with undiminished fury high in the mountains, threatening great pines and firs and other evergreens that would be irreplaceable. They must be saved to protect the great watersheds.

In the major over-all fire planning, the fire boss had decided where attempts should be made to stop the fire and what lines should be built. Already on some of the more accessible ridges there existed fire trails that had been built years before. There were other places where new lines could be built with bulldozers—lines that can generally be held because they are wide and are usually dug right down to the bare earth.

But there are places where even the bulldozer cannot go. In the higher reaches of the Angeles Forest the slopes are too precipitate and the ground too rough for any machine. That is where the lines must be built and held by hand. That is where the fight becomes a personal affair and the fire the deadliest enemy you have ever faced.

Calling Out the Army

As soon as it was seen that the fire could not be controlled by the men immediately available, calls were sent out for help. From New Mexico and Arizona came trained Indian crews, Hopis, Apaches, Pueblos and Zias. From camps in the National Forests where they did pruning and served as fire crews, came minimum security prisoners from Folsom and San Quentin penitentiaries. From near-by Army camps came soldiers and Air Force trainees.

To take charge of these men, Forest Service personnel were flown to the Angeles fire camps. There were men from the hot, brush-covered Cleveland National Forest in extreme southern California and men from the tilted, rugged Trinity Forest in the north. There were men from the Sierra, the Shasta, the Lassen and the Mendocino. Each forest sent its trained men, its plans chiefs, its service chiefs, its camp bosses, its line bosses.

The fire boss has over-all charge of the entire fire. Immediately beneath him are the line bosses, each of whom has responsibility for a certain fire line. Each line is divided into sectors under the charge of a sector boss and under his supervision three crew bosses direct the work of the fire fighters. I was a crew boss on a sector team sent by the Modoc National Forest.

On our arrival at the fire we had first been assigned crews of soldiers and had constructed a line on the desert side of the mountains. But when that line had been successfully held we had been sent high into the mountains to battle the still uncontrolled inferno there. For that work we had been given Indian crews since the terrain



A little of the terror and power of a forest fire is caught in photo made near White Salmon, Wash.

there was considered too severe for the soldiers who were unused to it.

On a saddle high between two mountains a drop camp was established. Other than by pack train, which was much too slow, there was no way to get supplies to the fire line except by airplane. Anything that might be needed in the battle against the flames was attached to a burlap parachute, loaded into a plane and then shoved out when the plane flew over the camp.

Carrying tools, lunches and canteens we hiked from the fire camp to the line, doing

enough climbing to satisfy the mountaineer in each of us. The day started before dawn so we could be at work by the first light of morning and ended when it was too dark to work safely in such rugged country.

Although the spot fire that had forced abandonment of our line spread rapidly, we got above it. Again I laid out a line and once more the crew began slashing and cutting and scraping to make another barrier. If they were discouraged, they showed no sign of it. This was the finest crew I had ever worked with.

All of them were full-blooded Pueblo Indians. They had been flown from their home Pueblo in Taos, New Mexico, several days before. Most of them still wore their hair in long braids, and when they conversed among themselves they always used their native tongue, a musical language that seemed full of soft vowel sounds. All summer they had been fighting fire, from northern Idaho to southern Arizona, but at their work they always displayed fresh enthusiasm and verve. I wouldn't have traded them for triple their number of pick-up laborers.

This time we got the line in. There was another spot fire but this time the lookouts above us hopped on it with their shovels and had it out before it could go any place.

We'd licked our part of the fire—as, all over the area, other crews were licking theirs. Though



On their way to fight a Montana fire that has already taken eleven lives, a crew hits the trail.

50,000 acres had been burned out, this was small damage when compared to the vast holocaust that would have developed if it hadn't been for the men, tools and techniques of the Forest Service. . . .

Of all the hand tools used in forest-fire fighting, the lowly shovel is the most valuable and versatile. For digging it is unsurpassed, and it can also be used for scraping and for throwing dirt. I have seen fires burning 30 feet above the ground, put out with dirt thrown from a shovel.

The double-bitted axe is another important fire tool. So is the brush axe, with its specially made curved-L head on a single-bitted axe handle. It is used mainly for slashing and cutting where the size of the brush makes efficient use of the heavier regular axe impossible.

The two other hand tools most generally used in fire fighting are peculiar to the Forest Service. They are the McLeod and the Pulaski, both named after the rangers who invented them. The McLeod looks like an oversized hoe with

huge rake 'teeth on the side opposite the blade. It is primarily meant for scraping, although it can be used for cutting and even for throwing dirt.

The Pulaski closely resembles a double-bitted axe except for a mattock edge that replaces one of the blades. Thus one blade of the tool can be used for chopping and the other for scraping, digging fire out of logs, and cutting through thick grasses.

Given his choice of only two hand tools, the lone smoke-chaser will invariably choose the shovel and the Pulaski. With them a line can be constructed in almost any kind of cover and almost any kind of mop-up can be accomplished.

In putting a fire out there is no such thing as being too careful. Too often fires left for out have blazed up into full-scale conflagrations.

But on large fires it is never possible to put everything out. Sometimes islands of unburned trees or brush deep within the fire lines will burn for weeks. Such places can safely be left to burn out by themselves. But everything close enough to the line to cause possible trouble must be left cold. Fortunately, on such fires there is always plenty of manpower for mop-up after the fire is under control.

Pick-up crews and loggers are often good on line construction, but on mop-up, when the excitement is over and nothing but hard, dirty work remains, they are practically useless. Convict crews are better, although they still usually need lots of supervision. The crew boss who lets a con crew out of his sight too long is likely to find them settled down in some comfortable spot complaining about something rather than working.

Yet I recall a convict crew that except for Indian crews, was the best I ever worked with. This was on the San Gabriel Canyon fire that did millions of dollars worth of damage to the Angeles watershed. It was made up of a murderer, two forgers, two men in for armed robbery, and a kidnapper.

We had been assigned a section of line to patrol and mop up. In it we found a big tree that had nearly burned through at the base and had then gone out. High up in the tree, in the midst of a mass of dead branches, enough fire still remained to send sparks scattering about and to cause pieces of heavy limbs to come crashing to the ground.

The two fallers who had been sent with their chain-saw to cut the tree down refused to have anything to do with it. I didn't blame them at all. Undoubtedly the vibration from their saw would be enough to cause some of the heavier branches to fall, and even their hard hats would not give them sufficient protection.

That meant we would have to burn the tree down. Under the circumstances I would not

have ordered anyone to work under it. But to pile dry wood against the base and get it started burning, someone would have to take the chance of getting hit. To my surprise all the convicts volunteered.

With one man posted back where he could watch the top of the tree and yell if anything started to fall, the rest of us got busy. We soon had a nice stack of dry wood around it. In a few minutes it was blazing merrily. I think the crew got a lot more fun out of setting a fire than from putting one out. And when the tree crashed to earth well inside the fire line, they let out a cheer that I doubt could have been more enthusiastic if they had suddenly been given pardons.

The Only Safe Place

Danger is always present in fighting forest fires. A sudden shift in the wind can make the flames burn much faster and harder than has been expected. In canyons and on ridges, drafts are often subject to rapid change and can send the fire leaping at you like an unleashed monster. Even the most experienced fire fighters have had to run hard to get out of the flames' way at some time in their careers.

The safest place to run if the fire comes at you is into the old burn. Lightning may strike twice in the same place but fire cannot burn a second time what it has already burned once.

In the early stages of the Angeles fire, I was directing a crew of soldiers as they put in a line on a ridge along the edge of some brush that had burned the day before. That particular type of fire line, built half in the burned area and half in the unburned, is called cold trailing. It is meant to give insurance that the fire will not take off again.

Suddenly a freak gust of wind struck what must have been a bed of hot coals and sent them whirling into the brush around us. Almost instantly there was a hot fire burning in the explosive thickets and with a great roar it came straight at us. I don't believe any man can stand and see a wall of flame come at him and not feel some panic.

One of the soldiers yelled and ran. But instead of heading for the burned area he began running uphill. That would have been all right except he was heading straight for a spot where the line passed through an unburned patch of brush. If he had stumbled and fallen there the fire might very well have caught him. Fortunately, just as I yelled at him to stop, one of the sergeants grabbed him by the arm and began to pull him into the burn. Quickly the rest of us followed.

The fire came rushing up to the edge of the burn and lashed out at us with orange tongues of flame, but we were safe. Sparks fell all about us, but other than a few holes burned in our

shirts, and faces reddened from the heat, we escaped unscathed.

That evening many of us were witnesses to a near tragedy. A slop-over had occurred on a ridge across a canyon from where we were waiting for trucks to take us back to camp. The fire had burned up the far side of the ridge, jumped the line, and was now burning down the near side. Slowly, it made its way towards the bottom.

If a great section of the line was not to be lost it was imperative that the slop-over be picked up by putting a line around it. It would have taken too long for men to hike over there, so a helicopter was brought in and a crew was ferried from where we were across to the ridge where the fire burned.

Once on the other side the men started climbing down to get below the fire. We could see them making their way carefully along, carrying a tool in one hand and holding on with the other. Suddenly, unforeseen and unforeseeable, came a gust of wind that drove the fire directly at the slowly moving men. With a gasp, everyone who was watching rose. It seemed impossible that the men could escape. Horrified, many of the watchers turned away—but a sudden spontaneous cheer brought their eyes back to the scene.

Over on the side of the ridge the men could again be seen. Somehow or another they were all moving, and that meant that none of them could have been burned too badly. We later learned that the fire had come at them so fast it burned only the most highly inflammable leaves and light grass as it passed over them. It was gone almost before they knew it. A few light burns and a scraped nose for one of the men who had thrown himself violently to the ground in an attempt to escape the flames, were all the injuries sustained.

Not so lucky were some fire fighters who were caught by a sudden flare-up in a canyon on the Mendocino in July, 1953. There was no burn in which they could find shelter. All those who tried to outrun the fire instead of escaping off to the sides, lost their lives. They were probably smothered by the heat and smoke before the fire even got to them.

Time of Danger

Considering the risks involved, the Forest Service record for safety is a fine one. On the Modoc Forest we've had a record-breaking three-year period without a single lost-time accident.

In the great forests and grasslands of the country, summer is usually the dry time of the year. During the hot, dry months fire-danger predictions are prepared by the Forest Service. These are attempts to forecast possibility of a fire catching and rate of spread. They are based on readings obtained at small weather stations stra-

tegically placed throughout the forests. From them the Fire Control Officer determines the amount of protection needed and so disposes his forces.

But though it is possible to predict fire danger it is impossible to predict exactly when and where fires will start. In one year there have been as many as 200,000 separate forest fires in the United States and they have burned as much as 23 million acres. California alone, in 1948, had 10,000 separate fires.

Lightning is responsible for approximately 25 per cent of all the fires that start annually on Federal lands. Another five per cent are set by incendiaries, and the remainder are almost all due to carelessness. The great Tillamook fire of 1933 in Oregon, that burned 245,000 acres of the finest timber in the nation, was started by friction from a steel cable wound around a stump by a logging crew that had been ordered to stop work because of the high fire danger. Cigarettes thoughtlessly thrown from moving cars have started many fires; so have untended campfires.

Near the end of last year's fire season, but while the danger was still extreme, a railroad running through the Modoc Forest sprayed its right-of-way with a weed killer. Within a week after that, almost every time a locomotive went down that track the lookout on nearby Timber Mountain picked up a fire. The inadequately tested spray was inflammable. For a time, fire crews were so busy along the railroad that they started heading that way every time the telephone in the guard station rang.

A fire along a railroad track is easy enough to find, but those that show up far from any road and in almost impenetrable country can be more tantalizing than any maze. I have known the humiliation of not being able to find a smoke that the lookout has described as big enough for even a blind man to see. But down there in the forest, where many times all you can see are the trees right around you, you often need help in finding a fire.

Upon spotting a smoke the lookout calls the district office, giving the direction of the fire. If two lookouts can see the same smoke and get reading on it, it can be pinpointed on a map as to section, range and township and thus is usually easy to find.

But when only one lookout sees a smoke and it is in country without outstanding landmarks, then the smoke-chaser is in for trouble. And he is always plagued by the knowledge that it is the small fire that isn't gotten to quickly enough that spreads and becomes the big forest fire the whole nation reads about in its newspapers.

One hot sunny day in August last year the Timber Mountain lookout picked up a smoke. It was in flat, rough, juniper-covered country and no other lookout could see it. I was assigned

to find it and went bounding away over the rocks in my jeep.

A radio call to the lookout got me the information that the smoke was not rising very high and was often laying down in the trees in such a way that it was difficult to spot at all. The lookout also told me that due to the lack of landmarks she could only give me an approximate location. Added together those things spelled trouble. Probably a long hot day's search for a fire that I might never find.

Smoke-chasers, though, even in the thickest forests do not work blind. I had a portable radio that I took with me along with my shovel and pulaski when I was forced finally to leave my pick-up and start out on foot. I also had my mirror.

A good lookout, and the girl on Timber Mountain was one of the best, can do much to make the smoke-chaser's job easier. Sometimes she can actually look down from her mountain and watch his progress through her binoculars and give him directions. At other times she can spot the dust from his truck and guide him from that. And at night she can watch his headlights and guide him by them.

But when the smoke-chaser goes on foot into the trees to look for a small fire and has no idea of its true location, he is in the need for real help. And I really needed lots of help this time. Where I was the trees were so close together that at times I thought I was back in the brush country of southern California instead of way up north on the Modoc.

By using my compass and climbing trees so I could get a shot at the lookout, I finally worked my way to where I was on the direct line of sight from the lookout to the fire. Then I prepared to put my mirror to work.

First, I called the lookout on my portable radio and gave her my approximate position. As soon as I was certain she knew about where I was, I told her I was going to give her a mirror flash. She acknowledged and I set about climbing the tallest juniper I could find, because to use a signaling mirror two things are necessary: the sun and a view of your target.

Essential Lady

A mirror flash properly given can be seen for miles. There was even the case of a lookout who spotted such a flash from a distance of 25 miles and mistook it for lightning. The girl on Timber Mountain picked up my flash at once.

By the time I got back to the ground and called the lookout again on the radio she was able to give me my exact location. Without her help I would not have known whether to go toward the lookout or away from it, but now she told me the smoke was about half a mile from where I was and toward the lookout. After

that, using my compass to keep in a straight line, I easily found the tree.

The fire itself was in the base of an old juniper stump and was probably a holdover from the lightning storm of a week before. The principal damage was to a huge pack-rat nest built in the stump. It smoldered like a pile of old rubber, I spent the rest of the day digging around in that, putting out sparks and cussing pack rats.

No Faucet Handy

Water is only sometimes available for putting out fires in the forest. There are no hydrants in the woods. The Forest Service is of course well-equipped with tankers that can and do go over almost impossible roads. But the amount of water they can carry is limited and it often has to be conserved. Back-pack pumps are also available, but the task of carrying five gallons of water on your back over rough country is not an enviable one. On the great 25,000-acre Mears burn on the Modoc in 1951, caused by sparks from a locomotive, water was brought in tank cars from 70 miles away.

Fortunately, the great lightning storms that start so many fires are often accompanied by rain. Three of us once walked in a mile and a half to a fire started by lightning. It was burning hard in scrub junipers and grass. Working madly we finally got a line around it and were just about to start mopping up when the clouds opened up and dumped tons of water. The fire went out in a hiss of steam and we

tramped back to our tanker that we hadn't been able to get close enough to the fire to use.

At the end of a season there are many memories that hang on and persist. I particularly remember the last night before leaving the Sulphur Springs fire on the Angeles. The fire was under control, mop-up had begun, and those of us who had been on the fire the longest were to be released the next day.

That night we gathered with our Indian crews around a carefully built campfire and talked over the events of the past days. Much that had been cause for alarm then was now cause for laughter. Quietly a couple of the Indians started singing. Some of the others picked up half-filled canteens which they used for drums. Soon their soft but still half-wild music dominated the night and everyone else became quiet. They sang in their own tongue and I could make out none of their words but yet I was certain they were singing of the work they had done so well and the satisfaction that they felt. It was a moment of which I was proud to be a silent part.

Fire fighting must necessarily always be hard and dangerous work, but there are few jobs that offer so many compensations. It keeps you out-of-doors in some of the most beautiful scenery imaginable and there can be few groups of men easier and pleasanter to work with than those of the U.S. Forest Service. And there is always the feeling that, in stopping fires in the great forests, you are doing something for the nation—and the world. —BY HENRY L. BUNSTEIN

After the fire has passed, only devastation remains. This was once a flourishing forest in Oregon.



the *TRIPLE JET ACE* with Red-Rimmed Eyes

By GEORGE LEONARD

*The major was famous for killing Migs—and his
own wingmen. When they put me on his wing,
I had to find out what devil it was that drove him.*

MAJOR MAC (for obvious reasons I can't use his real name) had already had four wingmen shot down when I was put on his wing. On the other hand, he'd shot down eight Migs and was one of the up-and-coming contenders for the title of leading jet ace. He was like a pitcher who had won 20 and lost 15 games.

But in the U.S. Air Force we didn't figure it that way. We figured one American life was worth 10 or 20 or even 50 Reds. So Major Mac was a pretty unpopular fellow in the squadron, and the other pilots looked at me as if they were already planning to attend my memorial service at Chapel #2.

Funny thing, though: I wasn't particularly afraid. I'd already flown five missions as Lt. Col. "Sig" Romberg's wingman and I'd never had any sweat. But then, Sig Romberg was the best by-God squadron Commander in the whole Air Force.

One day he called me into the Operations tent.

"Lieutenant Jerry Ford," he said in his casual, smiling way, "you've just been elected to fly wing for Major Mac."

"Who voted in that election?"

"I did."

"Well, gee, thanks a whole. What have I done to deserve this honor?"

"You know, Jerry, there's no proof of a definite error on Mac's part in any of the four cases where he lost wingmen. Maybe it was just coincidence, a run of bad luck. Mac's a rough pilot, an inconsiderate pilot. But he's a hell of a fine aggressive combat flyer and I can't afford to ground him. And if he flies he has to have a wingman."

"So that's where I step in. Number five. That comes between four and six."

"There's not going to be any number six, Jerry. I'm going to tell you honestly that you're

the best of the new pilots. You've flown five missions on my wing and you've never made a slip. I'm giving you Frank Latham's bird—he finished his missions today. It's the fastest "86" in the Group. Your name's being painted on it right now."

The colonel paused, then started talking a little softer.

"In utmost confidence, Jerry, I'm going to make you an exception to the usual wingman. If Mac ever gets in an impossible situation—say with 16 Migs on his tail and him going after just one—then refuses to break off, you can just break formation and let the pigheaded son get clobbered. Not one word will be said against you. I believe very strongly that you have the ability, judgment and guts not to break formation unless it's absolutely necessary. That's why I picked you for the job."

THE next day I flew it. Walking to the planes, Major Mac had a few words for me.

"I came to Korea to shoot down Migs," he said very softly. "I'm going to shoot down Migs. I'll worry about what's in front of us. You worry about what's in back of us. Don't fire your guns unless I tell you to. And stay on my wing, damn it."

It was funny the way that mission turned out. Mac didn't scratch and I got my first kill. We ran into a mass gaggle of about 16 Migs tooling along in sloppy formation at 37,000 feet. Mac drove us head-on right through the middle of them and they scattered like scared quail. There were the four of us and Migs all over the sky. Mac got behind a pair that started a very fine 100 percent climb. Now, any fool knows a Mig will outclimb an 86 at 37,000 feet. But Mac went right on after them, too far back to use his guns and not gaining an inch. A flight of four

Migs got in behind us and I told Mac they were closing fast. He said stay on his wing. Then those characters behind us began lobbing 37-mm. goof balls past my head. I could see and hear them exploding up ahead.

I rolled over on my back and went straight down. When I pulled up and looked around, the sky was empty. But I could hear plenty on the radio.

"Rebel Red Two, this Rebel Red Leader," Mac was saying. *"Where the hell are you? Where are you, you yellow coyote?"*

I didn't say a word, just started home at 30,000 feet. I was tooling along when I saw a bogie ahead and about 10,000 feet below. It was a Mig. I got within firing range and let him have it. He just blew up.

I started shouting over the radio.

"I got one! I got one! I got one!"

Mac heard me.

"Is that Rebel Red Two that just got one?"

"Roger."

"What the hell are you doing out of formation?"

"Rebel Red Two—no excuse. Out."

AFTER landing, he got me by myself and started chewing me out.

"What the hell's the idea of breaking air discipline?"

"No excuse, sir."

"I ought to get you grounded."

"Well, how come you were climbing after a Mig at 37,000 with four more on our tail?"

"Listen, you let me worry about tactics. You just fly at my wing. I'll let you off this time. If you're yellow, get the colonel to give you another assignment."

He walked off.

"Did you get one?" I called after him.

He kept on walking.

That night at the Club I spent my time just studying that guy Mac, trying to figure out what made him tick. I haven't told you what he looked like.

Well, there isn't much to tell. He was about five-eight or nine, kind of scrawny-looking, or you might say wiry, with slightly hunched shoulders. He had very dark hair and very light skin, a sharp face and a thin mustache. The only unusual thing about him was the way his eyes were always rimmed with red. It was like he never slept, and later I found out he very rarely did. Sometimes he rubbed his eyes as if they hurt, but he was never blinking them. They always seemed to be wide open.

There was quite a bit of partying going on that night. Mac stood around the edges of the crowd at the bar while we all drank toasts to just about everything we could think of. When the singing began, I moved to the side and

Illustrated by MILLER POPE



Fantastic Ballast

ON February 4, 1942, while Jap bombers roved the dark skies above Manila unchallenged, the American submarine *Trout* slipped gingerly alongside one of Corregidor's quays, a much-needed 3500 rounds of three-inch anti-aircraft ammunition beneath her decks. Her crew passed the shells, one at a time and by hand, to Corregidor's defenders while up forward torpedoes were lowered through her hatches. The job was nearly completed by midnight, when Lieutenant Commander Fenno, the *Trout's* skipper, studied a set of figures furnished him by naval engineers at Pearl Harbor two weeks before. His boat was too light! He needed ballast and lots of it if he were to quickly dive his sub in an emergency. Where would he get it? Corregidor needed every last one of her sandbags, and couldn't spare a single cement block.

He ranged the beleaguered island fortress fruitlessly till one of its leaders heard of his

problem. There was a solution to the problem, he said, if Fenno would take what was offered. The *Trout's* skipper agreed, so the ballast was furnished and loaded.

The submarine snaked her way through Manila's mine field on February 10th and headed for the East China Sea. Five days later she sank a Japanese cargo ship—dedicating it, no doubt, to the courageous men behind her on The Rock. Then she headed for Pearl Harbor, pausing long enough en route to sink a Jap patrol craft.

At Pearl she moored alongside a cruiser, whose sailors goggled as the *Trout's* crew transferred her ballast to the larger ship. For the *Trout*, over a voyage of 8,000 miles and through two engagements with the enemy, had carried the most valuable ballast a ship ever boasted—twenty tons of gold and silver, the reserves of the Philippines Republic!

—BY JOSEPH HARRINGTON

watched Mac. Some of our squadron songs were so complicated even Danny Kaye would have had trouble getting them out. But Mac seemed to know all the words. He didn't smile or cheer like the others. He just sang, looking intently from person to person as if afraid someone would see him miss a word.

Things got pretty drunk out and the guys started challenging each other to matches of Indian hand-wrestling. A couple of them would sit at the corner of a table, brace elbows, lock hands, then try to force the other's arm down on the table. Mac edged his way through the crowd of spectators until he was at the corner of the table. He stood there, concentrating on each match as if he were in it himself. When the contestants reached their highest point of strain and exertion, Mac's arms and shoulders would tighten up and I could even hear him grunt under his breath, he was trying so hard.

That's the picture of Mac I've always remembered most clearly—him standing there, tongue between his teeth, red in the face and all tensed up, fighting someone else's battle.

When Lon Jamison shouldered his way up to the table it was like a signal for all Indian wrestling to cease. He was a weightlifter and he had muscles most people never even knew existed.

"Who'll take on the Lon?" he said in a voice with a lot of diaphragm in it.

"Well, Atlas is here," a pilot said. "Us mortals can quietly retire."

"I'll take on the Lon," Mac said softly.

Lon immediately took off his shirt while the guys muttered in disgust. It was obvious Mac didn't have a chance. The two sat at the table and Mac looked right straight at Lon with those burning eyes of his. He never looked away from Lon's eyes.

MAC left his shirt on, but even so Lon's big bare arm made Mac's look like a toothpick. When they locked hands and put on the pressure, everyone was surprised that Mac didn't crumble right away. He must have stored up some kind of superhuman strength because he even started forcing Lon's arm over. Mac's whole body was shaking violently right down to his feet, and Lon, pretty surprised, was sucking in air while his eyes seemed about to pop.

It didn't last long, though. Lon braced himself for a moment then started a steady, powerful pressure. Mac's arm went down slowly and very painfully. But he never quit trying, even when his hand was only a few inches off the table. His face got red, then sort of purple, then completely white.

As soon as Lon let his hand go, Mac shook his arm a couple of times and said, "How about another try?" We were amazed.

This time Mac started off even more violently, but Lon was ready for him. He had to strain, but he got Mac down faster this time.

Mac said, "How about another time?" and they went at it again. And again. After about

three more times, Mac was completely gone. I think he was trying even harder. His whole body was shaking, but it seemed no strength at all would go into his arm. Lon was enjoying it immensely, pushing Mac's arm down like a baby's. The guys on the edge of the crowd began to walk off. Finally someone said, "For Pete's sake, isn't that enough?"

Reluctantly, Lon got up, put on his shirt and drifted away.

Well, that really broke up our party. As I went out of the Club, I looked back and saw that nobody but Mac was left. He was sitting there, pretty beat, looking off at nothing in particular. He was always the last man to hit the sack.

THE next day we really got into the Migs, and these were their hot boys, probably Ruskys. It was quite a tangle and we went round and round all the way down to the deck. That damn Mac was in his glory. He was pulling more G's than are on the G-gauge. To him G's meant nothing. And I was right on his wing. We got into a beautiful Luftberry with two of those babies and whenever I wasn't blacked out from the G's we were pulling, I could see the two of them on one side of the circle shining in the sunlight, with us on the other side.

Then the Mig wingman fell back just a little. That was all Mac needed. He hawked back on that 86 and, before I could believe it possible, let go with a short burst that knocked the Mig's wing right off. The Mig started spinning straight ahead like a broken toy, flashing in the sun every time it went on its back.

"How'd you like that?" Mac said over the radio. "Now I'll get the other one."

By that time we were already going straight down. The other Mig had decided to try something different. He went straight to the deck. And that's when the true madness began.

We were over that rugged country where there're so many of those mean-looking mountains it makes you shiver when you look down at them from 40,000 feet. But we weren't at 40,000. We were right in those mountains. The Mig went down into a valley, popped over a mountain and dipped right back down into a valley again. He was upside down, right over on his back. Mac was on his tail, closing fast, and I was right on Mac's wing.

"This boy's an ace," Mac said. "He's making inverted turns not ten feet off the ground."

It was true. That Mig pilot was doing a beautiful job. But Mac was still closing. Then I spotted the others, and it was as if I'd been expecting them there all the time.

"Four bogies, six o'clock," I said.

"Roger, I have them in sight," Mac said. "But would you look at this little rascal I've got

here. He's hitting trees upside down every time he goes over a hill."

"Well, for Heaven's sake, get him and let's bug out."

"But would you watch this beautiful flying," Mac said.

"Get him and let's get out!"

It seemed to me Mac was plenty close to fire. The four Migs were over us now and they had broken up into two elements of two, and were out on either side.

"Looks like they're going to yo-yo us," I said.

"The hell with them," Mac said.

He was pretty close enough to blow his Mig out of the sky. I saw two of the high Migs pitching off for us.

"Here come two from five o'clock high," I yelled. "Break! For God's sake, break!"

He ignored me.

"This is the sweetest, most beautiful lovely flying I've ever seen."

This was the time for me to break off and leave. But I didn't. I just kept shouting.

"Break, you stupid jerk. They're right on our butt now."



A blonde, as tall as Mac, she was the most openly sensual woman that I've ever seen.

I could hear the goof balls popping.

"Magnificent flying," Mac said, and blew the Mig out of the sky.

"Break left," he said softly.

We broke and I still don't know how he did it but in less than a minute we were headed straight for the Migs that had been on our tail—head on and firing all the way in. We got them. On the way home we both ran out of fuel and glided the last 50 miles.

I landed right behind him and both of us stopped at the end of the strip. I got out of my bird and ran toward him. He was running toward me.

"Did you see that beautiful . . ."

"Listen," I yelled, "what's the idea of not shooting that Mig down until you almost got us both killed?"

"But didn't you see . . ."

"I saw it all. I saw enough to realize you're a damn menace in an airplane and if I had any sense in my head I would have broken off as soon as I realized how completely crazy you are."

We were both panting. I've never seen anything like the happiness in those red-rimmed eyes of his. He was crazy, all right.

"Now let me tell you something, junior birdman," he said. "I know you've got a deal with the Old Man that you can break formation with me any time you want to. But do you know what I'm going to do if you ever break? I'm going to come right after you and shoot you down. I'll destroy the gun-camera film and nobody'll ever know the difference. You were just shot down by a Mig."

FOR a minute I thought I was going to hit him.

"What makes you think you can?" I said.

"I know damn well I can."

I was so mad I was shaking all over.

"Listen, you little crumb," I said, "I've changed my mind. I'm going to fly your wing as long as you're here. If there're a hundred Migs behind us I'm not going to tell you about them. I'll fly on your wing till you hit the dirt. I'll fly your forty missions and then I hope to hell you ask for a hundred more. I'll fly 200, 300, 400 missions on your wing till I see you burning, burning on one of those damn ugly mountains . . ."

Mac stood there looking at me. Tears came into his eyes. He was crying and laughing at the same time.

"That's wonderful, Jerry, wonderful. If you only knew how long I've prayed to God for a wingman like that." He tried to embrace me. "It's too wonderful to be true. Oh, God, we'll shoot down a hundred, a thousand Migs. Just please, please keep thinking the way you do . . ."

Well, you probably know the rest of the story. How Mac got 18 Migs to become the greatest jet ace—they called him "Triple Plus"—and then how the Old Man made him go home after a hundred missions. We were a great team, I'll have to admit, but the only way I could take it was hoping every mission he'd be shot down. After he went home the colonel gave me a flight and I got three more Migs to become an ace.

When I left Korea a lot of my life seemed to drop back into the past tense. At the Training Command base where I was made an instructor, we who had been there talked a lot about Korea and a lot of our best war stories were about Mac. We told and retold these stories so many times it seemed they never really happened at all but were just tales you might read in a book. Mac especially became for me a sort of fictional character and, even though I would read every now and then about the movie they're making on his life, it got hard to picture him as a real person.

I DIDN'T see him again until the big reunion of jet aces at Chicago this year. All the boys were there plus a lot of guys I didn't know. But I guess I was really there just to see Mac.

The first person I recognized was Colonel Romberg. After we'd greeted each other I asked him about Mac.

"Why," he said, "Mac's in my outfit in Seattle. He has a squadron. You wouldn't know him now, Jerry. He's very quiet and reserved. Quite a family man, now."

I would have never thought of Mac getting married. God knows he'd never mentioned women in Korea. Immediately, I pictured a scrawny, mousy-looking little gal—a lot of the jet aces I know married women like that.

I was certainly not prepared for what I saw when I walked into the bar and ran right smack into them. For a moment I couldn't even look at Mac. His wife was a startling, voluptuous blonde, as tall as he. Her clothes were not extreme in any way, but they couldn't hide it. She was undoubtedly the most openly sensual woman I've ever seen.

Mac introduced us and explained that I was the wingman he'd told her about. He looked exhausted, more beat than I'd ever seen him.

She took my hand and spoke in a soft, even voice.

"So you're the man who had to fly those last forty missions with Mac."

She didn't let go my hand. I looked her in the eyes and all of a sudden everything fell into a pattern—the Indian hand-wrestling, the way he went after that Mig.

No sir, Mac hadn't changed a bit. Around the edges, this babe's big blue eyes were red as fire.

—BY GEORGE LEONARD

How Good is Your - HEALTH INSURANCE

BY LAWRENCE GALTON

Some policies are full of booby traps, and few offer any real financial cushion against major illness. But by knowing the facts, you can make the best deal.

MAYBE you've already discovered it: the health insurance you carry can be disappointingly little help under many circumstances, disastrously little under some.

Certainly, millions of other people have become aware of this fact. Last year more than half of all Americans were paying for some kind of health coverage. Yet all the policies put together—87 million for hospitalization and 74 million for surgical and "other medical" care—actually covered not half, but *only 15 per cent* of the total \$10.2 billions spent by U. S. families for health needs.

If yours is an average family, your medical costs in 1953 came to \$205, and your insurance reimbursed you for only \$27 of this. Or perhaps your family wasn't as lucky as the average. For 11 per cent of all families, medical costs exceeded \$395; for 7 per cent, \$495.

Six million families had medical expenses that took a 10 to 19 per cent bite of their total income. Three million had expenses running from 29 per cent to 99 per cent of their income. And for half a million families, medical bills equaled or exceeded income.

These are some of the facts just revealed by the first national consumer survey of medical costs in 20 years—a survey sponsored by the Health Information Foundation, an impartial fact-finding organization supported by 165 drug, pharmaceutical, chemical and allied companies.

In addition to the millions of Americans with reputable but inadequate policies, and we'll return to them soon, there are many other people who have bought pigs in pokes, who are paying for protection they only think they're getting until they discover the worst too late. Their policies are full of booby traps. Hawked by mail order or door-to-door salesmen, they advertise much, deliver little.

There are policies which, as a come-on, advertise coverage of long and impressive lists of illnesses—but on close scrutiny, the lists turn out to contain countless repetitions of a few diseases under a variety of medical names—and often, the diseases are rare ones.

There are other policies so hedged with restrictions that, as one legitimate insurance official once described them to a reporter I know, "If you fall out of a 20-story window, they'll insure you down to the fifth floor, but from there on down you're on your own."

Many non-group (individual) policies—according to some estimates, fully 90 per cent—have clauses that allow the company to cancel at any time it chooses or to refuse to renew when the next premium payment comes due. While reputable companies generally won't cancel unless they think there's some skulduggery going on, others cancel just when you most need the policy. For Example:

➤➤ A man in Clinton, Iowa, took out

Growth of Voluntary Health Insurance



a policy on himself and his family, and paid his premiums regularly. "Last year," he says, "I found I had diabetes. The doctor put me in the hospital for 12 days. This was the first time I had ever made a claim with any insurance company and I sure was surprised how fast they dropped me." The letter he got from the insurance company read: "We can't tell you exactly why we no longer can insure you."

The "why" is obvious enough: In the eyes of this company, you're a good customer as long as you're a healthy one but a liability as soon as your health goes bad. The company paid the man for his 12 days in the hospital. But its cancellation left him without future protection. Obviously, no other insurance company would insure him against the diabetes he then had.

» When a machinist in Altoona, Pennsylvania, wrote to his union's weekly newspaper that his insurance company dropped him when he developed a lung ulcer, the union paper got more than 50 letters from its readers, recounting similar experiences with a total of 27 companies.

» An Indianapolis man took out policies to cover both himself and his wife for hospital and doctor expenses. "My wife was taken ill with thyroid trouble," he reports, "which in turn affected her heart . . . I received \$84 and a notice of cancellation on my wife's half of the policy."

As Mr. A. J. Hayes, president of the AF of L International Association of Machinists, testified to the House Interstate Commerce Committee: "The tragic side of the story lies in the vast difference between the glowing advertisements and the glib sales patter used to sell such policies, and the stark realities of their shortcomings when it's time for medical need."

Currently, the Senate Judiciary Committee as well as the House Committee is probing health insurance. And the Federal Trade Commission, which has also begun an investigation, is getting 150 to 175 letters a week from people all over the country denouncing insurance firms for failing to make good on what the insured thought his policy was supposed to provide.

But the Health Information Foundation survey underscores the *overall* inadequacy of *even the best health insurance* available to most families. For the coverage provided by reputable commercial insurers and non-profit organizations like Blue Cross and Blue Shield far outstrips that of the phony insurers. Yet, as the accompanying chart shows, insurance only pays one-half of the total hospital bill, one-eighth of doctors' fees and little else.

"What good is insurance if this can happen," says one man bitterly, after carrying Blue Cross and Blue Shield for years only to have to go heavily into debt with his wife's last pregnancy. Miscarriage had threatened five times, and his wife had had to go to the hospital twice and had been treated at home the other three times. The bill for medication, involving expensive hormones as well as other drugs, was staggering. And when the baby was finally born prematurely, weighing less than three pounds, six weeks in a hospital incubator were needed to pull the child through. After that, private nursing service was necessary for a time and there were numerous visits from the doctor. Insurance paid only \$80—just part of the cost of 10 days' hospital care. The family went \$2,000 into the red.

As can be seen from this and countless other examples, Blue Cross, Blue Shield and reputable commercial hospitalization and surgical policies

are helpful. But they don't go far enough—nor do they pretend to—and almost any family can run into trouble when prolonged illness strikes.

There are now 81 Blue Cross hospitalization plans, varying from area to area in charges and benefits. Generally, Blue Cross pays for a semi-private hospital room for a certain period (often 30 days; at most 70) and half the cost for an additional period of perhaps 90 days. It usually pays, too, for some medication, operating room charges and a few other services.

But if you're forced to take private accommodations because a semi-private room isn't available, you're not adequately covered. Nor are you, if you suffer from a sickness requiring a long hospital stay. If an illness keeps you in the hospital more than four or five months, all benefits may stop, and there may be a wait of many months before they start again. This means you have to pay all expenses in the very midst of your illness, just when you can least afford to do so.

Blue Cross contracts do *not* cover hospital admissions for *all* types of disability. If you have to be hospitalized for diagnostic tests, for example, you're not covered. In addition, many contracts exclude hospitalization for tuberculosis, mental disease, alcoholism or quarantinable diseases.

The estimated proportion of the hospital bill that Blue Cross pays, according to a report before the U. S. Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, is about 73 per cent. This figure, of course, is an average; in some cases, Blue Cross pays nearly 100 per cent of the bill and in other cases considerably less than 70 per cent.

In summary, non-profit Blue Cross gives you your money's worth, but has definite limitations.

So, too, with the 69 Blue Shield surgical plans now in operation. Sponsored by groups of physicians and run on a non-profit basis, their costs and benefits vary. Generally, Blue Shield has definite schedules of payment for various operations. The participating surgeons agree that the Blue Shield fee will be accepted as full payment when your income is below a certain figure—\$3,000 or \$4,000 a year, for example. Above this, the surgeon may charge a higher fee, billing you for the difference.

Some Blue Shield plans also pay something toward the cost of X-rays, laboratory services, anesthesia. A few provide some payment for doctors' calls in the hospital or at home.

Many Blue Shield plans specify waiting periods for certain illnesses. They provide only limited benefits for others. And they exclude outright such items as cosmetic surgery, dental conditions, normal childbirth, adenoids, appendicitis, cancer, contagious diseases, female diseases, hemorrhoids, hernia, mental and nervous diseases, tonsillitis, tuberculosis and venereal diseases.

According to the Senate Committee report, Blue Shield plans pay about 45 per cent of the average doctor bill and you pay the rest.

The hospitalization and surgical policies offered by reputable private insurance companies usually provide similar benefits at somewhat higher cost. And they have much the same limitations.

As one Congressman recently noted: "Today's insurance plans help people pay the bills for short-term illnesses that most people—with a little scrimping—could pay anyway. What most Americans need is protection against the long-term illnesses that cost thousands."

From your standpoint as a consumer, the idea of insurance is simple enough. As an individual, you can never be sure you will be able to pay all your medical bills out of savings or current income since you cannot foretell when sickness will occur, how severe it will be and how much medical attention will be required. Insurance, based on the mathematical law of large numbers, transfers the risk. For it is possible to make a reasonably accurate estimate of the total amount of loss that will occur to a large group of persons.

But, even with the best of intentions, organizations providing insurance have problems.

To maintain their solvency and to keep premiums within the range of most family budgets, they find it necessary to set up limitations on the number of hospital days allowed, the size of doctors' and surgeons' fees that will be paid, the extent of extra services provided.

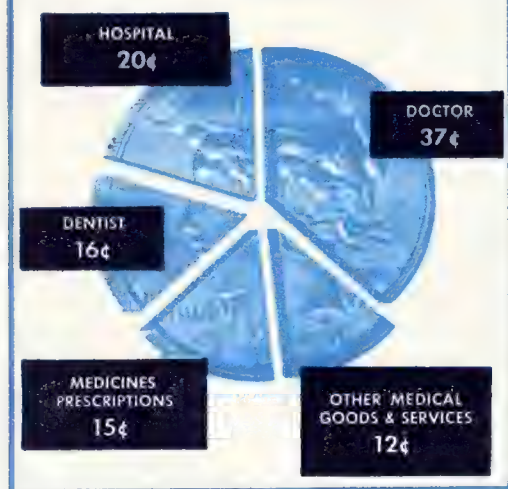
They exclude whole categories of disease to reduce risk—and keep premiums low. The exclusion of some illnesses, such as insanity, is often excused on the basis that treatment for them is offered without charge by governmental institutions. Yet, as David J. McDonald, President of the United Steel Workers of America, recently told the annual conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans: "I am personally familiar

make it easy

In the end of my hammer handle, I've drilled a small hole that I keep filled with beeswax or yellow soap. When working with hardwood, I stick the points of nails or spikes into this. This little lubrication makes them easier to drive. Even the natural oil from hair or the side of the nose will help nails go into hardwood. Rub a nail through your hair sometime and see for yourself.—Louis Martin Reitz, Bourbon, Mo.

Bluebook will pay \$5 for each "Make It Easy" published, but none can be acknowledged or returned.

Where the average health dollar goes



with a case of a steel worker who was admitted to St. Francis Hospital in Pittsburgh for treatment of a mental disorder. At the time of his admission he was not considered incurable, and expensive therapeutic treatment was administered . . . Yet this man was required to pay his own bill. In my opinion, a mental or nervous disorder treated in a general hospital is no different from an insurance viewpoint than any other ailment treated in the same institution."

There are other limitations, too. Most policies have a "pre-existing condition" clause that says the company won't pay for an ailment that can be traced to an illness or physical condition that existed before the policy was purchased. That's legal, although some companies don't advertise the limitation and most people who buy insurance go by the ads.

By and large, most medical-care insurance plans are written in terms of the demands of acute rather than chronic illness. Acute illnesses are chance rather than inevitable events and their duration is usually limited. Chronic illness, almost inevitable in a large percentage of the population sooner or later, is usually long-term illness. From the insurer's standpoint, it's a bad risk to cover if you want to keep premiums low.

Yet, chronic illness is a fact of life and an increasingly important one. Today, too, in this age of specialization, diagnostic services present great payment problems. A number of specialists, and even hospitalization for a series of tests,

may be needed before an illness can be diagnosed. But hospitalization and surgical insurance doesn't cover this. Drug costs and dental care are other problems left unsolved.

Moreover, the ideal of modern medicine is to detect and treat disease in its earliest stages, when it's not only more likely to be curable but more *easily* curable. And, even beyond this, to put emphasis on preventing disease altogether.

Yet health-insurance plans available to most Americans do not help in this. Their emphasis is on hospital and surgical care *after* the fact.

Studies have shown, as you might expect, that people who have hospitalization insurance go to the hospital more often than those who don't have insurance. Naturally, people who have some financial protection are more willing to seek hospital care when they need it. By the same token, if health insurance were broadened to cover other costs, people would be more likely to seek medical advice, undergo diagnostic tests, and undertake treatment *before*, rather than *after*, their problem became acute.

The importance of broadening health insurance coverage has been gaining recognition. And efforts to solve the problem are being made. Some examples:

» In recent years, independent medical care plans have been set up by companies, unions and other organizations. These plans usually offer relatively comprehensive benefits. Many have their own medical facilities. The majority include prevention and diagnostic services.

» Recently, some non-industrial plans offering comprehensive benefits have sprung up. The Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York (HIP), organized in 1946, is a well-known example. HIP, which is limited to employees of business and industrial firms, municipal workers and other groups of employees, provides medical care at home and in the physician's office as well as in the hospital. Great emphasis is placed on preventive medicine. Each subscriber from age 15 up is entitled to one physical examination a year. Health education bulletins are distributed to subscribers.

» A study by the Federal Security Agency in 1949 showed that there were then 185 independent plans offering comprehensive benefits with premiums ranging from \$1 to \$3 a month for individual subscribers and from \$1 to \$4 a month for families. But such plans are available to relatively few people—some three million, all told.

» Even as this is written, physicians in Long Beach, California, have proposed a medical-insurance pilot plan which they hope will receive the blessing of the American Medical Association. A family of three or more could subscribe to this plan for about \$15.75 a month. In return, the

plan would pay the entire hospital-room bill for 100 to 150 days, all doctor and surgical fees in the hospital and most of the hospital drug bill, plus \$1 for each visit to a doctor's office, \$3 for each time a doctor visited the home and half of X-ray and laboratory fees.

» In some areas, Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans offer broader protection through additional extra-cost riders on contracts and through combinations of contracts. Thus, if you can afford to combine a Blue Cross contract with a Blue Shield surgical plan that also includes some home and office benefits, you can get more comprehensive coverage.

» In just the last four or five years, commercial companies have begun to offer major medical expense insurance, sometimes called medical catastrophe coverage. Although still considered experimental, this type of coverage has been gaining an increasing foothold and more than 25 companies have entered the field.

A catastrophe policy is designed to supplement the usual hospital and surgical insurance by helping to pay for all treatment needed in long and expensive illnesses.

It contains two factors not usually found in other, basic health-insurance policies. The first, a deductible factor, operates on the same principle as in automobile collision insurance. It exempts the company from paying on any bills below a set amount ranging from \$100 to \$500 a year. With the expense of paying small claims eliminated, premium rates can be lower.

The second factor is called coinsurance. Above the deductible amount, the insurance company pays a major part (perhaps 75 per cent), but not all of, the bill. It's based on the practical theory that if the patient has some financial stake in the bill, medical costs are less likely to skyrocket.

Contracts are available that pay 75 per cent of all medical expenses up to a limit of \$10,000. They may cover all types of charges in the hospital for doctors, surgeons, nurses, anesthetists and physiotherapists as well as medical treatment, diagnosis and equipment and supplies outside the hospital. The policies vary but, as an example, one group plan offers an average family \$5,000 protection per family member for about \$130 a year with a \$100 deductible clause, for about \$45 a year with a \$500 deductible.

Meanwhile, the U. S. Government is also showing signs of entering the picture in an effort to give broader health insurance coverage to more families.

In 1950, Congressman Wolverton of New Jersey introduced a bill, still unpassed, to create an independent Federal Health Reinsurance Corporation. The corporation would get a \$50-million appropriation with which to reinsure

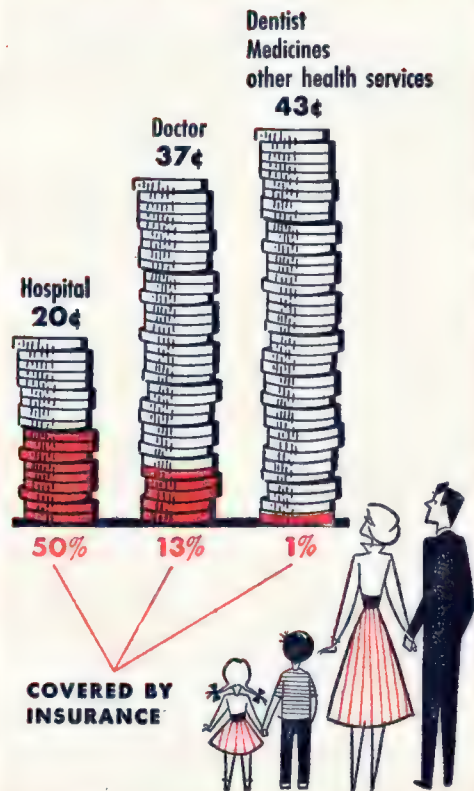
nonprofit health plans against losses over \$1,000 and thus encourage them to write unlimited coverage. Under the plan, the Federal corporation would repay the health plan two-thirds of claims in excess of \$1,000 paid in any twelve months. For this, the health plan would pay premiums to the Federal corporation of 2 per cent of the total gross payments it receives.

Premiums charged by the insuring health plan would be based on the subscriber's income. Subscribers would be paid up to 75 per cent of the cost of their first twelve visits to physicians, and up to 95 per cent of the costs of any treatments or benefits covered by their insurance contracts.

This year, President Eisenhower went on record in favor of a limited reinsurance program with an aim similar to the Wolverton plan.

There is, of course, no single panacea available and the probability is that much experi-

Part of health dollar covered by insurance



mentation will be required before the vast and complex health-insurance problem is solved in a way to guarantee the best of medical service to all.

Meanwhile, however, it's important for you to understand the problem. You're going to be called upon to encourage or discourage governmental action aimed at improving the situation. And, in addition, there's your own immediate personal situation.

What can you do right now to make sure you're getting the best coverage you can afford? Here are some suggestions:

1. Review your present policies. Find out *exactly* what coverage you have. Take nothing for granted.

2. Break your insurance problem down into four categories: (a) hospitalization; (b) surgery; (c) catastrophic long-term illness; and (d) loss of income during illness. Decide what you lack and what you need.

make it easy

PUT a knob on the inside of the door of discarded iceboxes, or drill a hole in the door large enough for a child to reach through and grasp the outside handle. Too many children are being suffocated in old iceboxes.

—W. H. Hotteroth, Omaha, Neb.

3. If you don't already have them, you'll probably want to start with hospitalization and surgical insurance. Non-profit Blue Cross and Blue Shield policies, if available to you, are good buys—especially if you can get them as a member of a group. It need not be an employee group. Perhaps you can set up a group plan among fellow church or club members. And if Blue Cross and Blue Shield are not available, you may be able to get group membership in a good private insurance plan.

If group membership is out, you will have to get a non-group policy. Some Blue Cross and Blue Shield organizations offer such policies. Or you can get one from a private insurance company. In the latter case, pick a reputable insurance broker or agent to help you select a policy. Your doctor or local hospital may also be able to advise you.

4. If you can afford to supplement your basic hospitalization and surgical insurance with a catastrophe policy, it will take a heavy load off your mind. And if you buy wisely, you may well be able to afford it.

Buy a catastrophe policy with a high deductible feature. Actually, your hospital and surgi-

cal coverage will usually help pay for the first \$200 to \$500 of expense anyhow. The higher the deductible clause, the cheaper your policy. A \$500 deductible policy, for example, may cost you a third less than a \$200 deductible one.

It's also a good idea to get a blanket policy rather than one that covers only a particular list of diseases. The cost is little more and you have what you really want: insurance that will help pay off huge medical bills no matter what caused them.

5. Consider a disability insurance policy to replace lost income. When illness strikes, the family must still live and daily expenses go on. If you're self-employed, you're especially likely to need insurance protection against loss of income. You'll need it, too, if you work for a company that doesn't pay a salary long to employees who are laid up.

If you buy a disability policy, you'll probably want protection not just against loss of income from an accident, but from sickness, too. Make sure you're getting it. Take out a group policy, if you can. If that's impossible, get the help of a reliable broker in choosing a non-group one. Check on what conditions are excluded, how long the policy is good for, what the cancellation and renewal provisions are, whether it covers you if you're confined at home and not in a hospital. Does it exclude pre-existing conditions forever so that, if you get sick sometime after buying the policy, the company will refuse to pay, claiming you had the condition to begin with? Or does it agree to pay on pre-existing ailments after you've had the policy for a certain period, perhaps three years?

Don't put stock in the advertising claims—inspect the actual provisions of the policy itself. Compare policies.

Right now, the Federal Trade Commission is investigating the health-and-accident insurance business, looking into any "false and misleading" advertising. The commission is reported to be preparing a master list of all the eight hundred or more companies in the fast-growing industry and, for each firm, will list the benefits policyholders receive and compare them with the protection promised in the company's ads. The result will be a kind of shopping guide for buyers of policies. The guide, which may possibly be available to the public within a few months after you read this, will probably be sold by the U. S. Government Printing Office. It will be a valuable contribution.

Although health insurance, as it stands today, isn't adequate, the picture isn't a bleak one. Increasing pressure from the public is bound to result in a big improvement. And, meantime, a careful study of your own particular needs and perhaps a change in the coverage you have may pay off for you.

—BY LAWRENCE GALTON

Baseball Quiz

By Tom Dowling, Jr.

So you know your ball players, do you? Well, let's find out just how many you know. Below are 20 big-league players' nicknames followed by the reason they are so tagged. See how many you can identify from memory.

Your Score: 20 right.....you homered
17-19 right.....you tripled
14-16 right.....you doubled
11-13 right.....you got on
10 or less.....you struck out



Nickname	Reason	Answer
1—PREACHER	Because when he was a boy he was always walking around the house talking to himself.	_____
2—SWISH	Because of the way he wags his bat while awaiting the pitch.	_____
3—PEE WEE	Because he was a junior marbleshooter.	_____
4—CRASH	Because of his rough and ready style as an All American at Ohio State University.	_____
5—MIGHTY MOUSE	Because he is small but powerful.	_____
6—COUNTRY	Because Burt Shotton said he was a typical country boy.	_____
7—THE BRAT	Because a sports writer once called him The Brat from Kensington.	_____
8—STASH	Because this is Polish for Stanley.	_____
9—HALF-COLLUM	Because of his small stature.	_____
10—BUBBA	Because his little sister could not pronounce brother.	_____
11—SKOONJ	Because this is an affectionate Italian name.	_____
12—YO-YO	Because of his bounce and energy.	_____
13—THE CAT	Because of his cat-like ability in the fielding of the ball on the mound.	_____
14—SPEC	Because of his father's freckles.	_____
15—TWIG	Because it's a contraction of his last name.	_____
16—CAMPY	Because it's short for his last name.	_____
17—SHOTGUN	Because of his "spray" hitting.	_____
18—JUNIOR	Because he was only 17 when he joined the Baltimore Giants of the Negro League.	_____
19—BOOTS	Because he looks like a typical cowboy.	_____
20—RIP	Because of the resemblance to last name.	_____

Answers: 1—Elwin Roe; 2—Bill Nicholson; 3—Harold Reese; 4—Vic Janewicz; 5—Solly Hemus; 6—Enos Slaughter; 7—Ed Stanky; 8—Stan Lopata; 9—Jackie Collum; 10—Emory Church; 11—Carl Furillo; 12—Pompeyo Davallo; 13—Roy Campanella; 14—Frank Shea; 15—Wayne Terwilliger; 16—Roy Reputski; 17—George Shuba; 18—Jim Gilliam; 19—Al Brazier; 20—Eldon



The Third Strike

He already had two strikes against him, when
up from the past came a sharp-breaking curve.

A Short Story by William R. Cox

WHEN THE MAN who called himself Army Benedick came to Coleville, he knew it was close to an ending of some sort. He was unshaven, parched and ragged. At 32, his skin was slack upon sinews once cushioned in muscle. His possessions comprised one scuffed leather bag containing almost nothing.

Coleville was lost in the backwater, a valley town among rippling hills which wore October browns. It was a neat, pleasant town, the center of a truck-farming district, modestly prosperous.

Benedick paused before an establishment which bore a sign: COLE GRAIN AND FEED CO.—ICE, COAL AND WOOD. Then hesitantly he entered. Behind a high old-fashioned desk was a young woman in a white blouse. She had brown eyes and chestnut hair brushed back from her brow, and a coolly impersonal manner. "I'm afraid you won't do. We need a man to drive a coal truck."

He said, "I heard this was a baseball town. I can drive a truck and play a little ball."

From an inner office a voice roared, "Baseball? Who said baseball? Send him in, Mamie."

Benedick went into a room where a stout, bald, graying, burly-shouldered man looked him over and said, "On the bum, huh?"

"Sort of." Benedick gazed at the framed pictures on the walls, all autographed shots of ballplayers. "I've been sick."

"I'm Samuel Cole. I run the ball club. We got a franchise in the Inter-County League for next spring. Where'd you play last?"

Benedick made a gesture. "Out West. California." Ten years ago, he failed to add.

"You a hitter?"

"Yeah. I play first." He had learned to play first pretty well and he had always been a fair stickman.

Samuel Cole eyed him carefully. Then he said, "You got some age on you. I need experience. Tell you what. If you can drive my coal truck and last until spring, you got a deal."

"Thanks."

The stout man fumbled, handed over a 10-dollar bill. "Get a room, straighten yourself up. Take a drink. You need one. But don't show up here drunk or even near drunk."

Benedick took the money. A bottle and bus fare, he thought. He could head south and duck the winter. It was a break, better than he had expected. He went out of Cole's office and the girl was looking at him. He stared defiantly.

Then he read the bitterest of all messages and dropped his gaze. The girl pitied him.

She said, "Mrs. Donner serves good meals at her boarding house. We'll give you some help on the truck until you break in."

He nodded and went slinking onto the street. There was a diner near by and he went in for coffee and something to line his stomach against the booze he would buy next. He looked out of the window while he was eating and wondered how many towns he had been in that were just like Coleville. He was running out of towns.

He paid the counterman and on impulse asked Mrs. Donner's address. He walked down the street to a liquor store and bought a half pint of bourbon. He found the boarding house and to his own amazement he gave the woman a five-dollar advance and took a room.

It was a clean, comfortable room with a soft bed. He uncorked the bottle and took a big drink. He sat on the bed and through his window he could see an oak tree, bent with age, its sere leaves dropping gently in a slight west wind.

For the first time in years he slipped gently off to sleep, the remainder of the liquor untouched. The next morning he looked at the little bottle for a moment. Then he turned quickly, got out his toothbrush and went down the hall. He showered, and toweled himself hard. He came back, put the booze in his bag and went to the coal yard.

They gave him a three-ton hoist truck, a

map of the town and its surroundings, and a boy named Calvin to show him the ropes. He drove under the chutes, loaded up with chestnut coal, and received instructions in a few details by Bottsy Dorgan, a husky young man who acted as straw boss around the place. Mamie gave him delivery tickets—one ton was C.O.D. He drove out of the yard.

It was simple enough to arrange the truck chutes to the window and let the coal slide into a bin. But the third delivery was a "carry job." The iron baskets each held 100 pounds of anthracite, and it was necessary to tote them on his back for 50 yards before dumping them. Twenty trips—he barely made it.

Gasping, rubber-legged, he wondered why he bothered. He could take the C.O.D. money, stall the kid named Cal, and get out of town inside an hour.

He drove back to the yard. He turned in his tickets and Mamie—her last name was also Cole, she was Samuel's niece—took one look at him and said, "Bottsy's got some chores around the storeroom. These other deliveries can go tomorrow."

Benedick said, "I'm all right. I can rest while I'm driving."

He made three more loads, somehow got back to his room, and collapsed exhausted on the bed.

THE weather turned cold inside a week and the work was so hard he could think of nothing else. He became so impregnated with coal dust that when he wasn't slaving he was bathing. He ached from head to foot all the time through Thanksgiving.

Then one day he realized he felt no pain in his muscles. And when Samuel Cole whistled him into the back office at the conclusion of work and offered him a drink of good whiskey, Benedick said as if amazed at himself, "I haven't had a drink in four weeks. And I don't even *want* a drink."

"You must be crazy," said the stout man mildly. "Call Bottsy and we'll talk some more about the cut-off play."

In previous bull sessions about the game he had discovered that Cole was strong on statistics, while Bottsy was merely a sounding board. Benedick had been led into lectures, beginning with the fundamentals of strategy, until finally the two would be an audience, rapt and pleased. Sometimes Mamie came to the door and listened—and when he caught her eye the pity was gone, replaced by thoughtful respect.

He had long ago noted the sad air about this pretty girl. Bottsy explained that her fiancé had been killed in an auto accident. A one-man girl, Bottsy observed, shaking his head. She was still

unwilling to look around at willing and husky suitors—such as a yard foreman. . . .

Changing the subject, Bottsy said: "The old man's gonna put you in charge of the team. Midburg got its franchise last year, y'know. We got to beat Midburg."

"There's no coal business in the summertime," said Benedick.

"He's takin' on a gas-and-oil contract. Just to keep us busy."

"Is everybody in Coleville as baseball nutty as he is?"

"Everybody better be. We ain't gonna have Midburg lordin' it over us, not now or never." Bottsy's voice roughened and his ears grew pink.

WITH the first thaw he started playing catch with Bottsy in the coal yard. His arm was rusty, but he knew it was still sound. He found Bottsy to be a strong boy with more eagerness than skill and began coaching him. He got a fungo bat and began knocking flies.

In nothing flat he had an army of recruits. They came from everywhere and cluttered up the yard, chasing baseballs until their eyes bulged. When work became impeded, Bottsy would yell and a dozen pairs of hands would fall to until everything was shipshape again. . . .

The day the ball park was pronounced fit for practice, Benedick led his motley crew to a skinned diamond bordered by a clipped outfield which would have done credit to the leagues. Small boys had mowed the grass, aided by a flock of sheep loaned for the purpose. There was a small bleacher-grandstand and room for hundreds of cars to park within viewing distance.

It was the spirit of the thing that moved him, though. It was like his college days at little Corbin U., where every student was active.

He was able to weed out his best men and from the culls pick a Yannigan squad to which he diplomatically promised future action on the "varsity." Between his baseball activities and new duties at the yard, he had no time to think of danger, of the future. The days sped by and he grew tanned and eager, looking forward to each day as he had not in 10 long years.

Samuel Cole had a final conference with him just before the opener against Midburg. "Never expected to put such a good team on the field. But Midburg has brought in ringers. My spies tell me they're onto us and are good and ready."

"In baseball nobody wins them all," Benedick cautioned him.

"Coleville wins them all against Midburg," said his boss stoutly. "What's our weakness, Army?"

Benedick fingered the mustache he'd grown. "Pitching. Hob Evarts is all right. But we've only got Bottsy behind him."

"Bottsy can throw, but he's wild."

"The others won't do. I'm working with young Cal, but he won't be ready for weeks. Maybe not then."

Samuel Cole said, "Never did see a man take holt like you have. Must have had a lot of experience."

"I've had some." It was not the first time the kindly merchant had hinted that he was open for confidences. Benedick's lips were stiff with effort. "Nothing to talk about."

"Well. . . . Going to the dance tonight?"

Benedick said, "Guess I'll have to show." It was a big pre-game affair, again reminding him of college days.

The older man hesitated, then said awkwardly, "Mebbe you could take Mamie?"

"Why—sure, Uncle Sam. I could ask her." He was startled, but the idea pleased him.

But all the way into the office he knew it was a mistake. He had gone far enough, possibly too far. One more crack-up would finish him. He had felt the beginning of the end when he arrived in Coleville. Despite everything good that had happened, he could clearly remember how close he had been to disintegration in October.

Yet he went directly to her and asked, "How about the dance tonight, Mamie?"

She half-raised a hand, then put it back down on the desk. "Yes. I'd love to go with you."

"I know about George." The fiancé's name had been George Geary. "You can't grieve forever. At least I don't think you can."

She nodded. "You've been through it?"

"A long time ago." Ten years ago. She had walked out with no regrets. Not that he blamed her; he blamed himself for everything. But she had been so cool about it.

WEARING his new dark gray suit he felt born anew, escorting a girl. She wore a white dress, simple but smart. There were a hundred people in the hall and every one of them knew his name, spoke cheerily to him, prophesying dire events on the morrow for the Midburg invaders.

He found Mamie an adept dancing partner. Once she said, "You're professional in everything you do, aren't you?" and he slowed down. He wanted none of that old nickname, "The Dancing Kid." It was one of the things that had started it all.

He walked her home. The hills lay softly beneath a lambent moon, the crickets had begun their seasonal hymn, the soft scent of new blossoms perfumed the night. He asked, "New beginnings are all right, aren't they?"

"I'm trying to manage one." She was always

direct. Moonlight softened her hair; when she was relaxed there was a lovely serenity which overlay her, conveying promise.

"I'm trying to imagine one," he said softly.

She nodded. "You've had your share of trouble, haven't you?"

"I made it for myself." He choked it off. No good to talk about it, not ever, not to anyone. He had never been able to alibi it to himself.

"George drank too much," she said. "I knew it. But I loved him. I couldn't help loving him. He was drunk the night he ran into that pole, you know. But with all his drinking . . . well, it just didn't make any difference."

"Yes," he said. "Sometimes right or wrong doesn't count." He hadn't thought anyone else ever figured that way. They paused at Samuel Cole's garden gate.

"But it must," she said. "There must be a set of rules. Like baseball. Rules to be obeyed. That's what I'm trying to learn."

His enthusiasm died. "Sure. I know you're right. Well—good-night, Mamie. Thanks for going with me."

He walked away, hands thrust deep in his pockets.

He knew the rules, all right—he'd always known and understood them. Then how long, he asked himself, must he pay?

And he answered himself: All the years of your life.

THE day of the game was bright enough and clear enough for even Midburg's wildly cheering citizenry, a crew of leather-lungs arriving in busses and immediately challenging every Coleville fan with green money openly displayed. Benedick watched from the bench and asked Samuel Cole, "What is this, Las Vegas?"

"It's the bounden duty of everyone to bet on his team," said the fat man, grinning. "I got a thousand on you."

"A thousand bucks? Are you crazy, Uncle Sam? You can't afford to bet that much on a baseball game."

"Reckon it wouldn't be so much fun if I could afford it."

"Boys will be boys, I suppose," said Mamie, beside him on the bench. She smiled, and then arose and made her way to her seat in the stands.

The Midburg manager was approaching with the line-up. With him was a slouching tall fellow in uniform, a tobacco-chewing man with abnormally long arms. Samuel Cole met him grimly, no nonsense, all business.

Benedick sat stock still. For a million dollars he could not have arisen from the planks of the bench.

"This is Jack Donovan. We got him registered just under the deadline," said the Mid-

burg man defiantly. "I brought an affidavit, knowin' you'd beef."

Samuel Cole examined the document with utmost care, then eyed Donovan. "A pitcher, huh?"

"He ain't a bean-bag player!"

"Okay. Pitch him, then. Now, about fly balls into the crowd . . ." The two moved off.

Donovan remained a moment, staring at Benedick. He said, "Hiya. Where you been?"

Benedick said, "Around." His voice was a hoarse whisper.

"The mustache almost fooled me." Donovan moved close. There were deep, malicious lines around his hard mouth. "Geez, it's been nine, 10 years."

Benedick said, "Maybe you've got me wrong. I'm Army Benedick."

"Sure. And I'm Jack Donovan."

He was Chick Bartlett. He had been a great pitcher with the Sox until they caught up with him. Betting on games, they said when they barred him. But there had been other things, too. A woman, a fight in which a man was killed, and a horse-race fix had also figured in the secret hearings.

So now Chick Bartlett was Jack Donovan. Benedick said, "Let's let it go at that."

"How much you got ridin'?"

"Not a dime," said Benedick.

"Okay. I got plenty on it. So we win."

"No dice," said Benedick.

Donovan cocked an eyebrow. "You kiddin', pal? If you ain't got a bet up, you got some stake. You better see we win."

Benedick said, "Lay off me, Donovan. I'm not with it. Do you understand?"

"Like that, huh?" Donovan spat tobacco juice, wiped his chin. "Look, pal, after this one I'm lammin'. You blow the whistle on me, I'm long gone. What about you?"

"Nothing," said Benedick harshly. "I said no dice."

THE two managers were returning. Donovan said quickly, "What the heck. We're neither of us hay-shakers. Maybe we can get together later and do some good. I'll leave it lay, kid. But I can't let you beat us today. I can't, understand?"

He shambled away, his huge hands swinging low. He was on the booze, Benedick thought. He was no longer great, and if Hob Evarts could hold the Midburgs . . . Coleville's kids could hit and run and they had acquired a lot of baseball knowledge in the past weeks.

Samuel Cole was saying to him, "You know that big lug?"

"He's a ringer, all right," said Benedick evasively.

"How good is he?"

"Maybe not good enough." He was regaining his composure now. He could think again. He went on the field for the workout. He kept an eye on Donovan, knew the old leaguer was watching him. He conferred briefly with Evarts, managed to shake his head once or twice as though debating. Then he donned the first-baseman's mitt and walked to his position. He chanced a glance at Donovan, received a wave of the hand in return.

He was all right. Because Donovan had never known him as a first baseman he was safe. Donovan had known him as a pitcher. He only needed not to hit in a timely spot and Donovan would believe he was going along with it. He could be safe as a dollar. One man could only do so much to throw a ball game.

THE umpire bawled the time-honored, "Play ball!" and Evarts toed the mound. Mechanically the infield talked it up. "Get the leadin' man in there, Hob, ol' boy, get him outa there. Let him hit it, ol' boy, everybody hits, we got him, ol' boy . . ." Senseless, mechanical, unvarying chatter—and it meant everything.

Evarts was sharp. He was trying with everything he had. He struck out two and got one on a pop and Benedick walked off the field with him, warning, "Don't bear down too hard. You've got nine innings to go, remember."

He fastened his attention on Donovan, pushing the specters back into their lairs. He found himself admiring the easy motion of the former great pitcher. The fast one still seemed to have zip. And the Midburg catcher, another rugged veteran, seemed to be working in a rocking chair.

He spoke to his youngsters, "This man Donovan is tough. Wait him out. Make him throw."

His nerves were like violin strings. He was batting fifth and he found himself wishing no one would get on, so that he could bat with no pressure on him. He needn't have worried. Nobody on Coleville was hitting Donovan in the early innings.

He trotted out to first base again. Evarts could not relax. Every throw had his all in it. Benedick began to identify himself with his pitcher's problem, talking to him, advising him. It eased his own travail.

He went off the field, knowing he was on deck. He knelt in the box, seeing everything with great clarity. He could weasel out of it, he knew. Bottsy Dorgan swung valiantly and fouled to the catcher.

Donovan grinned at him from the mound. He stood easily at the plate, relaxed. He looked over a couple of curves and then the swift one came in. He blinked at it. He could never have got a piece of it, not on his best day. Relief

surged through him. Even if he tried he could not hit Donovan's stuff.

Then he did try—and went down swinging.

As the game went on without a score the rivalry between the teams waxed, until the heat generated fire. Gilroy, the tough Midburg short-stop, slid hard into second and a fight began. Benedick was in it before he remembered, then aided in making peace. The tension mounted as the final inning approached.

Samuel Cole was sweating it out with the team. The stands were poised for the slightest manifestation of a rally by either club. In the beginning of the eighth Benedick sensed impending trouble.

Bottsy was up with two out. Donovan wound up, threw. Benedick came to his feet with the motion. Donovan's fast ball was coming in without the necessary stuff. Bottsy swung and the sound of wood on leather left no doubt in anyone's mind. Bottsy went into second standing up.

Benedick's hands were wet. He walked slowly to the plate. Donovan shoved back his cap, stalled a moment. Then he eyed Benedick, ball in hand.

Both knew the truth. Donovan had lost his speed. He had some control, a curve perhaps. But the big one was gone.

The big pitcher nodded as though accepting the catcher's sign. Benedick knew better. This was the pay-off. Donovan meant business now. It was on the table, plain to see: Strike out or listen later, while Donovan blows his whistle.

Benedick made no gesture for anyone to see. He was remembering another time when he had made a choice. He held the bat high, with slightly open stance, watching the ball in Donovan's hand.

The curve came in for a ball.

Then another curve missed the plate.

DONOVAN would have to get it over. He dared not walk Benedick and open the gates for young, eager boys to learn that he had weakened.

Benedick waited. He saw the pitch, fat and straight as a string, coming waist-high. He brought the bat around, pulling for right field, behind the runner. He smacked the fat of the bat into the ball and began running.

He might just as well run out of the park, he thought. He saw the ball bounce, the right fielder make a grab, turned to see Bottsy chasing home. He slid into second, came to his feet and looked across at Donovan.

The pitcher's face was grim and foreboding. He turned and threw to the next hitter, who obligingly swung too late and fouled out. Then he walked slowly across the field so that Benedick



"It's the bounden duty of every man to bet on his team," said Uncle Sam. "Boys will be boys, I suppose," said Mamie beside him.

would have to cross his path. He said, "You asked for it and you're gonna get it."

Evarts took the mound and proceeded to come apart. He walked two men. Benedick went to him again and Evarts was white-faced, scared.

"We got 'em licked, Arny. But I can't finish. My arm—it's dead. Can Bottsy do it?"

Bottsy couldn't and Benedick knew it. Now Donovan was rising from the bench, shading his eyes with a hand, gesturing. Benedick understood that gesture well enough. Donovan didn't want a beef. He wanted the ball game.

Throw Bottsy in cold. Let him take his lumps. Donovan would keep his mouth shut, even now, if Benedick would only cooperate.

Samuel Cole was on the field. "What we gonna do, Arny?"

Just put Bottsy in there, thought Benedick. Let the strong boy take the beating. Nothing to it. Nobody will ever know. You can be home free. You already felt what it is like to buck Donovan when you got that hit. You're through if you don't get wise to yourself. You know you can't run any more. You've known that since last October.

His mind raced. Again he thought that this was the beginning of it, the cradle of it. A decision made here was like a stone in a still pond, sending its ripples to the big leagues, to the Series.

Finally he knew what counted and it was not himself. He asked Evarts, "Can you play first?"

Uncle Samuel Cole said nothing. Evarts was startled. "But what about Bottsy?"

"Give me the ball," said Benedick. He looked at Samuel Cole. The stout man was already walking to the bench.

He was alone on the mound and nobody had ever been such a stark target. He molded the new ball in his hands and looked for Donovan. The pitcher was already talking into the ear of the Midburg manager, gesticulating, pointing toward Benedick.

He shrugged, motioning to Popper Poole, the Coleville catcher. He threw easy pitches even as the Midburg manager moved to the Coleville bench to protest to Samuel Cole. A hitter came up.

He found his old motion like a man easing into an old coat. He brought back his arm and showed them that famed follow-through which had made big-leaguers blink those days 10 years ago.

He used only his speed and a change-up. When he pulled the string the ball hung there before dipping beneath swinging bat, and one man had struck out.

ON THE bench Samuel Cole was jabbing a thick index finger at the Midburg mentor. Benedick shrugged. He pitched.

He swung side-arm, still not using the curve. He had the man completely off-balance when he served it inside, on the corner, handcuffing him. The ball rolled off the handle back to the box. Benedick picked it up and rifled it to second. Two out. A man on third, a man on first.

He took his time. The hitter was a big, strong boy. He set Strong Boy up with a duster, then curved at last. Popper almost muffed it despite warning. The boy missed a mile.

There was an argument at the bench. Donovan had gone over to get into it. Benedick smiled, coldness in him, ready to finish it all, wanting only to get to Donovan.

Because, if this was the cradle of the game, Donovan was the snake menacing the infant. Spreading his evil counsel, his deception and treachery, he could do incalculable harm among the less than brainy athletes who aspired to the big time. This was caught enough, Benedick thought, for making the ending he had known was inevitable.

He unleashed his fast one. The strong boy shuddered away from the plate to take the second strike. Then he threw a nasty little hook that came in where no bush-leaguer could expect it to. The boy struck out and the game ended.

Benedick went into the melee about the bench. Bottsy was making the long run from right field and the stands were emptying. Bene-

dick said, "Break it off or there'll be murder. Beat it, Donovan."

Donovan and the Midburg manager seemed, miraculously, already daunted. They were retreating. The fight was over. Mamie had come to stand by her uncle. Benedick set his jaw.

In low tones he said, "He's right. I'm—I mean, I was Kid Carney. But he was Chick Bartlett, so they haven't got a beef."

Samuel Cole said, "Shut up and let's get out of here before we're mobbed."

With some difficulty they escaped the cheering citizenry. Benedick rode to the coal yard without changing and in Samuel Cole's office Mamie and her uncle were quiet, looking at him.

"Ten years ago I threw a game," said Benedick. "I got into a jam and I was sore at the manager and I still haven't got an excuse."

"Yep," said Samuel Cole. "I know."

"How could you know anything about it? Ten years . . ."

"You might recollect I follow baseball pretty close. You was the Dancin' Kid and your wife was a show gal and you was twenty-two. You did wrong."

Benedick looked at Mamie. "Now maybe you understand—things."

She said, "Uncle Sam told me, long ago."

There didn't seem anything he could say, then. He started for the door.

Samuel Cole asked, "Where you goin'?"

"I can't play ball for you any more."

"Just a minute. You gonna quit?"

"You mean I'm not fired?" He put one hand on the door jamb, looking across the cluttered office at them.

"You could have got out of it—three times today. You think I don't know that?"

Mamie said, "Uncle Sam bought that oil business for you and Bottsy to run summers."

UNCLE SAMUEL said, "Only thing I see against you is takin' that fool name to torture yourself. Army Benedick! Benedict Arnold! That's plumb stupid."

"You made a mistake," said Mamie. "Who hasn't?"

"Nobody's gonna stop you from coachin' my ballplayers," said Uncle Sam. "Who knows the wrong things better?"

Mamie said, "You've learned the rules now. Where better can you go to live by them?"

Uncle Sam said, "You served 10 years. That's a long sentence. Don't be a danged fool."

Benedick couldn't say anything. He held tight to the door frame until his eyes cleared and he could see them again.

You got two strikes on you, he thought. But it takes three. Maybe you got the big one left.

—BY WILLIAM R. COX

HANGOVER

Hangovers come in sizes and stages, but all have a common cause—drink. If you've never had one you wouldn't be interested in this.

By JIM BISHOP

IT is to be hoped that there is no one in the class naive enough to believe that a hangover comes from anything other than getting powerfully jugged.

You cannot acquire one from eating spaghetti *a la Pizzicato* while knocking off a beaker or two of red ink. Nor can you build one of respectable proportions by merely mixing your drinks; if your esthetic sense can stand a daiquiri followed by a creamy Alexander, your constitution will not protest. Not much, anyway.

To get a hangover, you must drink . . . too . . . much.

In America, there are about 65,000,000 persons who drink. Most of them—about 40,000,000—are occasional drinkers. Of the remainder, 2,000,000 are alcoholics, a special class of heroes we aren't concerned with here. That leaves about 23,000,000 persons who, once in a while, find themselves in the condition this scientific paper proposes to examine.

A hangover is something that is going on when, as Colonel Stoopnagle used to say, if Death

Illustrated by LOWELL HESS



walked up you'd grab him by the hand and say, "What kept you?"

Webster defines a hangover as "something that remains from what is past." He couldn't be more in error. It is not something that remains at all. It is something *new* that crept in when the past walked out, and left the door open. Only the night before, the mind crackled with wit, the eyes flashed and sparkled, the feet glided in the sinuous rhythms of the rumba. Now, the mind cracks open, the feet jerk involuntarily, and the eyes, as Ted Shane once put it, are hard-boiled eggs in a bowl of chili sauce.

This is not something that remains from last night. This is something that sneaked in at dawn.

Hangovers come in sizes and stages. No two are exactly alike. And some, medical science feels, are more dangerous to life and limb than being drunk. The writer, for instance, can recall that he was once in a Stage Two, Single-Cycle Hangover while driving to the office. He was humming, although he doesn't sing and couldn't carry a note if it had two co-signers. But what frightened him was that he noticed, in passing a parked car, he was automatically moving two lanes to the left to get around it. In his caution, he was moving into zones where cars had a fair chance of meeting him head on.

The simplest hangover is a Stage One, Single-Cycle job. In this, the patient wakes up with a rhythmic, pulsing feeling in the back of his head as though some frightened animal were having pups in there. With it goes a sable



tongue, eyes like wet rubies, and a feeling that certain things happened last night which do not usually happen. If the patient is married, it's his own fault and nothing can be done about it. When she wakes up, she will remember everything and if you think that she is going to be sympathetic, you're still drunk.

For this one, take two aspirins and a glass of water. It isn't worth anything more heroic.

Something More Elaborate

Then there is the Two-Cycle Hangover with Overhead Valves: This one is for week-end drinkers. It starts on Friday night when the patient says, out loud, that he just remembered that there is no work tomorrow. This leads directly to the bottle, and the bottle leads directly to the early grave. The patient knows that he has been through this Dry Tortugas treatment before, but, each Friday night, he is jaunty and confident that he can beat the system this time.

Sometimes he even counts. But, after four, he feels that only an alcoholic has to count drinks, so he stops the arithmetic and begins to bounce like a boy. In the morning, he finds that the ceiling is where it always is but, instead of being virginal white, it is full of gray patterns. Somebody hung the bedroom window a little crooked, but he's in no mood to straighten it.

After a bathrobe and the bathroom, he totters downstairs and steams himself up to a hearty "Good morning!" and "I feel grr-r-eat!" For this, he gets a cumulative stare.

This tells him that they were sober when he did it—whatever it is that he did. The toast



tastes like a pack of blotters and somebody forgot to change the oil in the coffee after the first thousand miles, but what is worrying the patient is how to get outdoors and snaggle a few cold beers with frost on the glass. Usually, he gets out. If he doesn't, he searches the garbage pail and holds empties up against the light.

Either way, he's a dead squab because, by nightfall, he is in a velvet glow. He beams ruddily at his children and will cheerfully help them with their homework, or mop the kitchen floor, or just sit and look at television and say, "I think I'll take it easy tonight," while mentally counting how many bottles of beer are left in the refrigerator.

Boy, oh Boy, oh Boy

By midnight, everybody is in bed except our patient, who is now grinning happily at a British motion-picture and wishing that he understood what the people are saying. He is now beautifully barreled and, when morning comes, he will be very sad indeed. His face will look like hot putty and his hands will behave as though he were holding two maracas. He will remain unshaved and uncombed all day and the chances are that he will remember only to button the top button of his trousers. All words will sound harsh; all bells will be strident; the fall of a feather will deafen him and he will beg the cat to please stop stomping her feet.

He will try Worcestershire in tomato juice, chicken broth, clam broth, raw eggs in milk, hot milk, ice water, a can of stewed tomatoes, scalding coffee, custard, soup, anacin, bromo-seltzer, and alka-seltzer, none of which will help a two-time loser. Some will give the *illusion* of helping, but remissions in a week-end hangover are only momentary and merely mean that the hangover is resting to gird its strength.

If he is under 40, the patient will begin to feel almost normal by Tuesday night. If he isn't, it will be Thursday before he feels that hanging is too good for the likes of himself. . . .

The Stage-Three-Harley Davidson with Cut-Out is for the periodic drinker. This type, when on the wagon, can't stand anybody who drinks and warns one and all that the best thing he ever did was to get off the dirty stuff and that if they weren't all morons, they would do the same.

This character goes along for months, sometimes years, without busting out of his arid jail. But, when he does break loose, he goes on a wild tear from tavern to tavern, skidding on the unbanked turns and scooping sand in his pocket.

After the first night, he will drink anything. In two nights, his breath smells like bottled poison gas. From the nose down, he looks happy. From the nose up, he looks as though he is in pain. When the last saloon closes, he is in a

chair in the corner, dozing over a half-filled glass. He is the man who, when his stomach rebels on Thursday, wonders what the hell happened to Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. When he is taken off the stuff, which is done rudely, peremptorily, and without mercy, he is kicking and biting and screaming. On his bed of pain, he begs pitifully for a drink. Just one. If he gets it, he wants it straight and of about the proportions of a percolator. If he doesn't get it, he claims that he is dying—it's not a hangover, it's his heart. If he has gone too far, and imagines that he's an elephant, he will see pink people on the wall.

Stage Three requires some nursing and calls for the services of a doctor. If the doctor is told, on the phone, the nature of the malady, he will bring the proper tools with him—sedation and a truckload of vitamin B-complex. Always tell your doctor the true score. If he isn't sympathetic, get a new doctor. . . .

These are the basic three hangovers: all others are variations of these. And the variations are infinite. For example, the best man at the writer's wedding, John Dundas, once had a unique hangover in which there were no symptoms. He woke up feeling normal and sober. No headache, no nausea, no shakes, nothing. It scared him purple because the inventory showed that he had fought a Fifth of Seagram's Seven to a standstill, and now he had nothing to show for it.

What John didn't know was that this is the delayed, or stuttering hangover, a variant of a Stage-One job. In an hour, the hangover hit him hard enough to blind an ox. Then it went away and he felt fine again. Then it came back,



stunned him, and left the scene. This went on all day and almost drove him to drink.

Excellent counsel on hangovers comes from Dr. Richard H. Hoffmann of New York, a world-renowned psychiatrist. Dr. Hoffmann says that when you drink too much, the stomach, the intestines, the pancreas and the liver are first stimulated, and then depressed. When you drink, these organs work faster. When you stop, they slow down to a walk. The stomach almost quits cold. It stops excreting gastric juices and the enzyme traffic stops too.

How to Get Unhung

At the same time, the brain retains water. So do the spinal cord, the liver and the stomach. This amounts to a mild case of dropsy. Simultaneously, the billions of cells in your body, which feed on various forms of vitamin B-complex, find that there is no breakfast because your booze has gobbled it all.

These cells, plus the nerve cells, remain placid and content as long as they get enough vitamin B. There is no way for you to store up some surplus B because your body will excrete any that it doesn't need. So none of us ever have more than enough of the stuff for today. Now, right here is the whole story of the hangover—alcohol burns up vitamin B. When you pour the booze down the hatch, it needs a lot of vitamin B to oxidize itself, to burn itself up, so it uses whatever B it finds lying around. It can't find much, because there never is a surplus.

So, in the morning, the cells of the body, including the nervous system, are screaming for B. You feel dizzy, nauseated. You have a headache, a loss of appetite. You do not hear well, do not taste as well, do not think as well. The heart, fighting the loss of nutrition to the cells, beats faster.

You are hung.

How do you get unhung? Well, any bartender will tell you that a million bucks awaits the man who can cure a hangover with a pill, and it can't be done yet. But Dr. Hoffmann says that the patient should have the following overdoses of B vitamins:

Vitamin B-1—100,000 units.

Vitamin B-6—100,000 units.

Vitamin B-Complex—100,000 units.

If it's a Type-Three Hangover, with syncope jerks, the patient should also have 40 milligrams of ACTH. A little cortisone will also help to raise the level of his resistance to stress. If the doctor thinks that it is necessary, a shot of insulin will help to burn up excess sugar.

But, for the ordinary Sunday-morning hangover, 100,000 units each of B-1, B-6 and B-Complex is enough. For the very best results, these should be injected by a doctor into—naturally—the buttocks. Close to where your brains are.

If you can't find a doctor on Sunday morning, or whatever morning the Cointreau cowboys surround you, the best thing to do is to take the B vitamins in capsule form. Go to the drugstore ahead of time and ask for Vitamin B-complex. When the druggist shows you his wares, pick out the bottle which lists the highest unit content. Keep the bottle in the medicine chest. On the morning after, take a handful of them with a water chaser.

Also, ahead of time, ask your druggist for some mild vegetable-base sedative. This will put the martingale on the nervous system until the B-complex is ready with a steaming breakfast for the nerve cells. Shortly thereafter, you'll begin to rise from the dead.

Say, by the way, what time do the saloons open?

—By JIM BISHOP

Human Mail

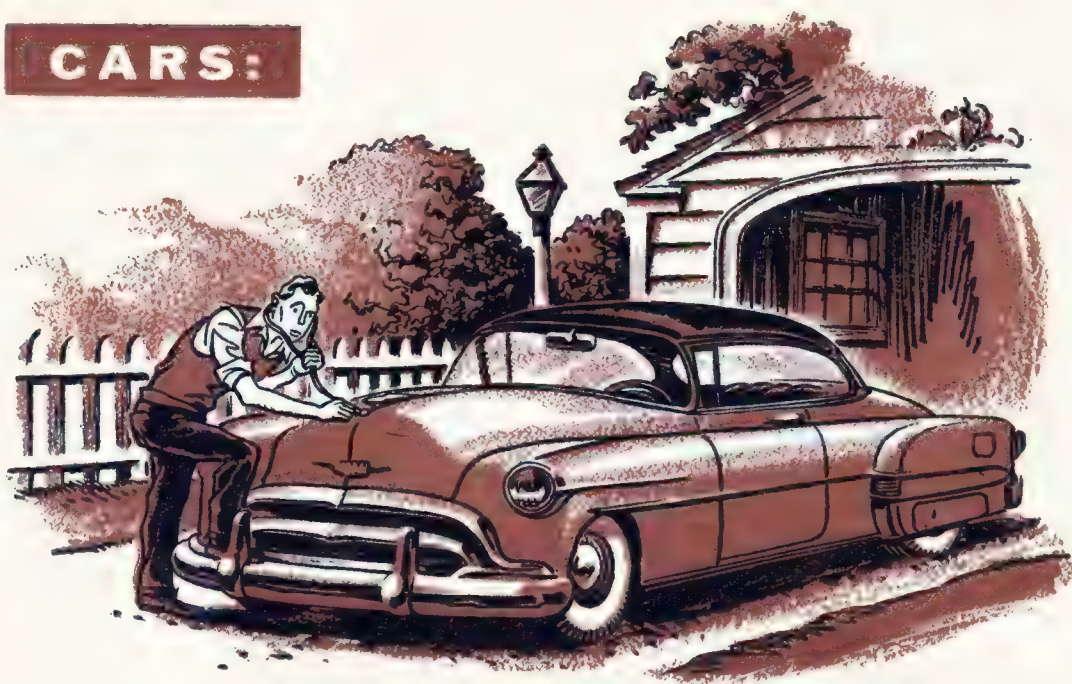
■ Until a few years back, it had been possible for a person to walk into a post office in England, buy a lot of stamps, and have himself dispatched to some destination in the United Kingdom. If equipped with a special-delivery stamp, the mailman had to escort him right to his doorstep and ring twice.

The last man known to have mailed himself used the postal service to outwit the British army.

On a visit in 1940 to the island of Guernsey in the English Channel, the man found, when he set out for home, that soldiers had taken all the places in the only boat. The soldiers' orders said they had priority over all other passengers. But the resourceful gentleman knew that mail had priority over soldiers. So he attached stamps to himself and the post office had to put him aboard.

—By Hartley Moore

CARS:



How To Tell What's Wrong

BY JOE H. WHERRY

**If you can spot what ails the old bus
you won't get taken by a gyp repair man.**

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO a friend of mine noticed a streak of blue smoke trailing from the back of his one-year-old car. Wraithlike at first, it grew so rapidly that in two weeks he was laying a veritable smoke screen and buying a quart of oil a day. Alarmed, he took the car to a mechanic who had been suggested to him as "the right guy to go to." Leaving his car for the proverbial going over, he was told to "phone back in an hour."

"Can't understand it," the mechanic reported over the phone, "but your car needs a complete overhaul—rings are shot and letting oil blow past, and the valves are in terrible condition."

With only around 8,000 miles on his car, my friend smelled a rat. So he picked up an engine-wise pal and they dropped into the garage. Find-

ing the engine head solidly in place, the owner's pal nosed around and discovered a piece of broken oil line beneath the car. This piece matched the oil lines on the car, except for a shining new piece of line on the bottom of the oil filter.

Although the mechanic sheepishly offered excuses, it was obvious from this evidence what had caused the blue smoke. The broken oil line, which the mechanic replaced, had been leaking oil onto the hot exhaust pipe. The backward and downward flow of air through the engine compartment had driven the resulting oil smoke out under the rear of the car. Since it was summer and the car windows were usually down, the owner never noticed the odor of the oil. He only saw the cloud in his rear-view mirror.

Probably the mechanic thought he had a

"live one" and for that reason hadn't bothered to remove the head in order to make his phony repair job ring true. He must have been counting on the owner's lack of knowledge about engines.

But as it turned out, a buck for a new oil line—and the trouble was over. And a guy who nearly became a victim of the repair racket was much wiser.

Fortunately, dishonest mechanics are a minority. Still, it pays to know what repairs your car actually needs. You'll save money not only by being sure a mechanic isn't doing unnecessary work, but also by getting the proper repairs done *before* major damage is caused.

How can you diagnose your car's ills correctly? Most automotive troubles have symptoms which, with a little previous knowledge, even the most unmechanical person can spot. Here are some ways to recognize those symptoms, along with advice on how to prevent the troubles in the first place:

BRAKES: Too often neglected, the brakes are actually the most important safety system on your car. On a level, little-traveled strip of dry pavement, drive along at various speeds and slam those brakes on as you would if a child darted in front of your car. If the car veers toward one side instead of following a straight forward path, the brakes need equalizing, or adjusting.

Perhaps the brakes squeak and fail to respond quickly to pedal pressure. This is a symptom of badly worn lining. The lining is usually affixed to the brake shoes by rivets, but when the brake lining wears deeply, the rivets are exposed. The result is badly gouged drum surfaces, and the drums then need to be smoothed by turning down on a special device.

Does your brake test disclose a soft pedal? If so, there's probably either too little fluid in the master cylinder, air in the lines, or both. Filling the master cylinder and bleeding the air from the lines is necessary. Normally a soft pedal, one that must be depressed more than two inches, will operate okay if you pump rapidly before applying full pressure—at least you can still get home. Lubrication men at filling stations frequently have to be reminded to check the master cylinder.

If replenishing the fluid doesn't correct the trouble, then we're back to the possibility of thin linings, or there may be a leak in the wheel cylinders. Check the backside of each wheel. If there's a grimy smudge on the bottom half of the brake drum, chances are the cylinder in that wheel is losing fluid, and you'll soon have a soft pedal again. Have that cylinder overhauled by honing out and installing a new piston. Of course if the cylinder is badly corroded, a new one is cheap insurance.

Brake life can be lengthened by following these tips:

1. Avoid driving through puddles more than two or three inches deep. Water-soaked brake lining swells, makes brakes very unreliable, even grabby, until dry—and too many soakings shorten lining life.
2. If a puddle can't be avoided, go through in low gear with the left foot holding slight pressure on brake pedal. This presses the linings lightly against the drums, prevents much water soaking.
3. Check brake hydraulic fluid lines. Remember that front lines are flexible and thus more subject to wear. Fittings should be tight. Front brakes wear much faster than rear because of soft springing which throws car's nose down and decreases effectiveness of rear brakes.
4. When stopping, leave clutch engaged until almost at a standstill. This allows engine to assist with compression braking, can double brake life. When descending long hills, use second or first gear. Constant use when descending causes brakes to heat; this heat causes "fading" and brakes become less effective.

CLUTCH: Perhaps the easiest way to head off major clutch troubles before they show up is to be aware of correct clutch pedal movement. From $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" free travel before the clutch begins to disengage is proper. A pedal that has little or no free travel, or more than the right amount is in urgent need of attention. What's more, free travel is easily adjusted by any competent mechanic. Ordinary wear and time itself tend to weaken the springs inside the flywheel housing; hence the free travel will eventually increase. An adjustment that tightens the clutch pedal's movement beyond the $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" limit will eventually score the pressure plate deeply.

A grabbing or chattering clutch, caught early, generally requires only inexpensive adjustment. Slipping simply means that the clutch is not taking hold firmly; the pull-back spring is often at fault and must be replaced. Likewise a rattling clutch usually is easily corrected by replacing the anti-rattle spring.

All of the aforementioned clutch symptoms, if attended to without delay when first noticed, can be corrected at small cost. To delay will mean the eventual complete overhaul, or replacement, of the entire clutch plate—and this can run well over \$30.

MECHANICAL TRANSMISSION: Probably the most common symptoms of transmission trouble is hard shifting, and the most common reason for this is insufficient lubrication. The grease level

should be checked every 1,000 miles without fail; at the same time have your "lube man" check the housing bolts for tightness and the grease seal for leakage. Incidentally, over-filling the gearbox can result in pressure build-up on long trips: such pressure can "blow" the grease seal and then the level decreases with dire results. If the grease level is okay, then the gear-shifting linkage and the clutch should be checked for the cause of hard shifting.

If the gears habitually slip out of mesh, the fault may be misalignment between transmission and engine, worn gears and bearings, badly adjusted linkage or a combination of all of these things.

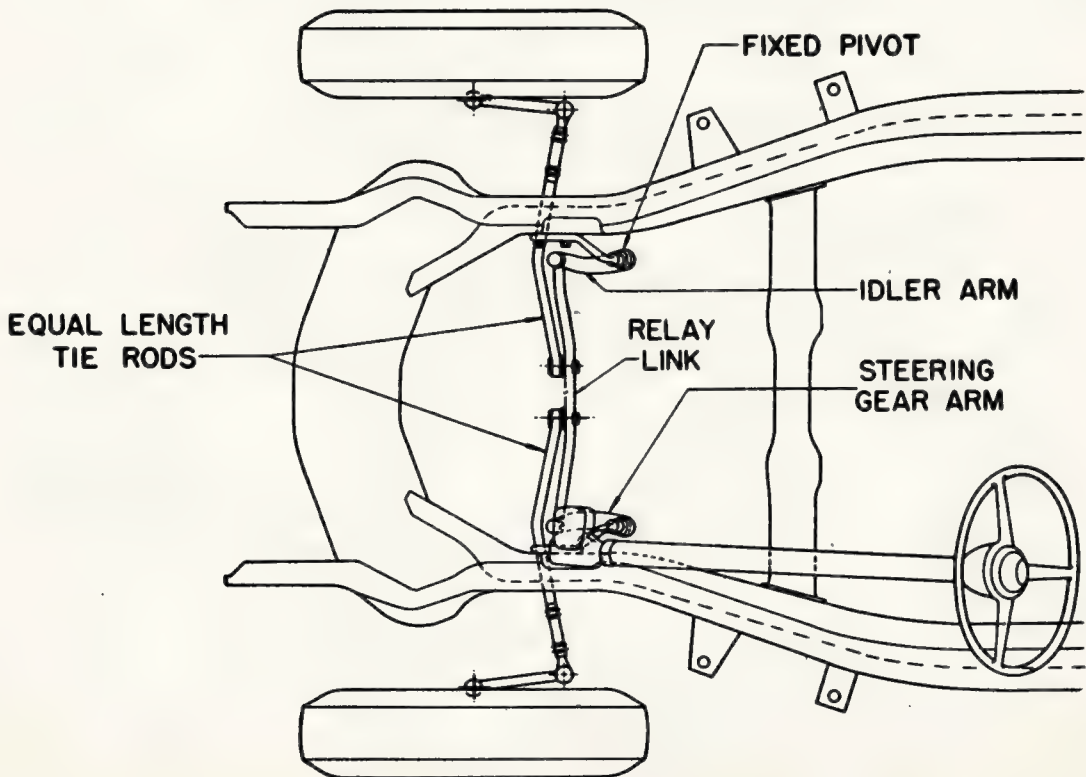
Synchromesh has been common for so long the noise from the gearbox is at a minimum in modern cars. But, rasping or grinding gears can result from excessive wear, a poorly adjusted clutch, low grease level, or gear teeth that are slightly chipped. I've known fellows to go right on driving with a chipped or badly broken gear in the mistaken belief that not using the gear concerned will mean no more damage. Any small metallic particle sloshing around in the gearbox will finally lodge itself between otherwise good gear teeth. However, if you hear a noise, check the sound further with the car in neutral—any noise that continues then is most likely from the engine.

**Three ounces of prevention
for clutch and transmission:**

1. Never hold car on hill during temporary stop by partially engaging clutch; the cork facing will heat rapidly and you'll buy a new clutch plate long before its time.
2. Don't put car in gear, then await green light with pedal depressed. This tires the plate springs and the return spring, decreases clutch life.
3. Accelerate smoothly. Even fast acceleration is not damaging to the degree that jerky accelerating and decelerating is. Drivers who have a jumpy gas-pedal foot, cause unnecessary strain on entire drive train including universal joints and differential.

A properly used clutch and transmission will outlast most other parts of the car. Used improperly, either or both may have to be replaced before an engine overhaul is necessary.

AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION: Most commonly heard complaints from Hydramatic and other automatic transmission owners is that the car stalls on sudden stops, creeps forward when the throttle is not depressed, or both. Not serious, but rather annoying, these tendencies usually go hand in hand and can be traced to incorrect idling speed of the engine. Refer to the



tune-up article in May BLUEBOOK and adjust the idling screw on the carburetor-throttle linkage. (Cars with mechanical transmissions are usually specified to idle around 500 revolutions per minute, but the automatic gearboxes, due to being constantly in gear during driving, require a lower idling speed—about 350 r.p.m.) Too fast idling engages the transmission and causes creeping when standing and stalling when stopped suddenly.

When automatic transmissions are checked regularly for correct grease level, little trouble other than the above will be encountered. If, however, shifting doesn't work properly or at the speeds specified in your owner's manual, and if adjusting the idling speed doesn't help, better consult an authorized dealer.

DIFFERENTIAL AND DRIVE SHAFT: Noise and growling from the rear end of the car often mean insufficient grease. That's easily remedied, but be sure to check the grease seal. A whine at an increasing high pitch when driving fast or going downhill under compression (without using the throttle) can point to a misalignment in the differential housing caused by a sprung frame, a sagging or broken rear spring, or even by a critically uneven weight distribution within the car. The remedy in each case is thorough examination with precise equipment. I've known of loudly wailing differentials being completely cured by a new spring leaf or by flushing and re-filling with the proper consistency of grease.

On the other hand a clanking sound when starting suddenly or when engaging the clutch rapidly while shifting gears frequently indicates badly worn universal joints. The all-direction connector between gearbox and drive shaft and between drive shaft and differential will take a lot of abuse, but eventually it will break and you'll not move an inch. It invariably does give its clanking warning, though.

Some cars have a third "U joint" in the drive train. Most U joints are equipped with grease fittings, but too often they are overlooked. When your car is on the lubrication rack, grab the drive shaft and twist it by hand; if the free play is enough to cause an audible sound, it's time to replace one or both U joints.

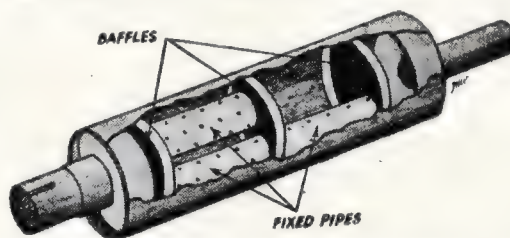
RUNNING GEAR: More than an inch or so of free play in the steering wheel causes wandering on long straightaways. The steering gear's grease level is another often overlooked item, and wear can go so far that it's impossible to correct by adjusting. Hard steering results from lack of lubrication throughout the entire steering system or from uneven tire pressure.

Tires that have worn unevenly are a tip-off the wheels are out of alignment. Modern independent suspensions, with their many moving

parts, should be checked at least every 10,000 miles as a preventive measure. Wise motorists will go to a shop that specializes in frame and suspension work, and where precise equipment like Bear and Weaver units are used. At this time, too, check the front wheels for correct balance. Unbalanced front wheels tend to bounce and tires are rapidly worn away. They get a gouged-out look.

Study the accompanying illustration on page 41 for additional tips on how to personally check the many various components.

EXHAUST SYSTEM: The muffler, being the best-known component of the entire exhaust system, is usually blamed for any offensive noises and engine fumes. "My car needs a new muffler," is an often heard diagnosis, but it's not always that simple or even that costly.



Two symptoms betray a faulty exhaust system: (1) a balky, coughy engine that refuses to respond to a tune-up and (2) noises combined with exhaust gases under the hood. Best procedure is to check over the entire system starting with the exhaust manifold. With the engine idling, lift the hood and look closely for smoke leaking from the connections between the exhaust manifold and the engine block. With one hand, accelerate the engine slightly by moving the carburetor-throttle linkage. Leaking exhaust gases can be seen quite easily, especially if the car is in the shade. If you're pretty certain of leakage, tighten the exhaust manifold holding bolts with a wrench. If this doesn't cure the situation, chances are that new manifold gaskets are needed. Replacing gaskets is as easy as falling off a log, and the gaskets cost little.

It's wise also to check the joint between the manifold and the forward exhaust pipe. Inline engines have a manifold on only one side, V-eights on each side.

Now for the muffler: Unburned carbon particles and moisture are always present in an internal combustion engine, and the muffler is composed of baffles and silencing pipes (see illustration) which eventually may become clogged with carbon or corroded by condensation. Often a muffler will visibly rust through and the source of noise is easily spotted. On the other hand a clogged muffler may not necessarily blow out. When it doesn't, the pressure from backed-up

gases can cause severely burned valves, blown-out manifold gaskets, a blown head gasket or any combination of these.

A muffler that is corroded and rusted badly on the interior can often be detected by several good cracks with the fist. If it rattles badly, it almost always needs replacing. It goes without saying that a clogged muffler, blown and leaking manifold gaskets, or both can cause an unwary owner to be talked into a rather complete engine overhaul, since the engine neither sounds nor acts right.

ENGINE: Let's assume that your car's engine is in a reasonably good state of tune. Now we'll use an old broomstick or heavy yardstick as a stethoscope. With engine idling (and in the open air for safety), place one end of the stick at the bottom of the block immediately above the crankcase, the other end to the ear. Move the "stethoscope" along the bottom of the block. Bad bearings will announce themselves by a distinct clanking.

Now let's check any bearing knocking to determine whether there is connecting-rod or main-bearing looseness. Using a screwdriver with an insulated handle, short out one spark plug at a time by placing the screwdriver so that the metal touches both the top of a spark plug and the engine head (or block in case of overhead valves). A bad connecting-rod bearing will cause a cylinder to misfire badly and the knocking will be loud and unmistakable. Repeat this simple test for each cylinder. Bad main bearings announce themselves by a deep clunking sound (and sometimes a faint vibration) when lugging or pulling hard on a hill in high gear.

Check the floor of your garage occasionally. Leaking oil is traceable, generally, to one of three sources: (1) the transmission, as stated earlier, (2) a leaking crankcase gasket or an ill-fitting or loose drain plug or (3) worse yet, a bad rear main-bearing seal. The last is indicated when a small puddle gradually forms just to the rear of the crankcase. Oil is wasted by leaking just as surely as if bad piston rings and worn valves allowed partly burned oil to be expelled in the form of blue smoke through the tailpipe.

There's another place where oil can be wasted too. This is the fuel pump with an integral vacuum booster that operates windshield wipers. Worn diaphragms in the fuel pump cause, in the early stage of deterioration, a suction of oil out of the crankcase. This oil waste telegraphs its punch by an oily smear around the fuel pump connection flange and by visibly leaking small drops to the ground directly beneath the fuel pump. In this case, the best solution is a guaranteed rebuilt fuel pump—a good and more economical remedy than buying a new pump.

In my opinion, and this is due to experience, the best solution to shot main and rod bearings and burned valves and worn piston rings is to install a rebuilt engine. These are available everywhere and are guaranteed. They contain new moving parts and are every bit as good (but much less costly) as a brand new engine. Worn-out fuel pumps and a bad rod bearing or two are fairly easily repaired. Connecting-rod crankshaft journals are now efficiently turned down without removing the crankshaft from the engine (a costly process). But if only one or two rod journals are repaired in this way, the crankshaft will be out of balance. So, in the interests of durability, better have each rod journal turned down to the same diameter and install new rods throughout.

Here are four ways to lengthen engine life:

1. Allow a cold engine to warm up for a few minutes by running at a fast idle. Even in hot weather, lubrication throughout the engine isn't immediately complete.

2. Don't drive flat out (wide open) continuously. Even high performance racing engines, so treated, require overhauling more often than you change your oil.

3. Use a good commercial oil filter and change oil regularly.

4. Service the oil bath air cleaner when needed. If this becomes dirty, abrasive particles filter into the engine and play havoc with cylinder walls and piston rings.

—BY JOE H. WHERRY



"Charlie!"





A Time For Whiskey

By VICTOR H. JOHNSON

The skipper was a good guy. But when the ship was disabled in a Force 12 wind, it called for strong spirits.

THE BUZZER by the pillow sounded. Abbot clawed for the speaking-tube in the darkness. "Chief," he answered drowsily.

"We've lost our propeller, Chief," Frank Hart said. The voice of the *Bixby's* first engineer was taut.

Abbot could not believe it—even after 18 days of heavy North Atlantic weather. He switched on the bunk light and propped his shoulders against bulkhead. Once in a lifetime you lost a propeller. It happened only in the tales of grizzled old Chiefs.

"You giving me the business?" he asked.

"No, Chief," Frank answered. "It's no joke. We've lost our propeller."

"All right. Be right down." Abbot, already in dungaree pants, swung from the bunk, stuffed his feet in his slippers, grabbed

his flashlight, and took off down the ladders.

The main engine was stopped when he dropped to the floor plates. Rods and cross-heads gleamed dully with oil. He looked about for the men of the watch—the oiler, the fireman, and Frank. Frank was opening a valve to the auxiliary condenser.

"You all right?" Abbot asked. Frank and his watchmates looked safe, but he wanted to be sure. His eyes moved to the shaft-alley emergency door.

"I don't know how we are," Frank answered. He was a dark, small but very muscular man, just above five feet. Frank had been a puny kid; he had taken up weight-lifting as a youth. Now he was so powerful that his strength gave him a healthy confidence. "I didn't see any

Illustrated by JOE KRUSH

water coming in," Frank continued. "I shut off the door until we can find out something."

"Good," Abbot said softly. Frank always did the right thing. "Engine get away from you much?" He squinted at the engine, as if the idle rods could tell him something. Sometimes when a propeller was lost, an engine ran away and beat itself up.

"Not much. I was at the throttle when she let go. I tried to slow her first by using the butterfly valve. She revved up pretty high even with the butterfly. It took the throttle to hold her." Frank saw the back-pressure climbing and motioned to the oiler to open it. "I don't think we're hurt much here."

From force of habit, Abbot continued on to the fireroom and glanced at the water level in the boilers. On ships much more complicated than this, he had found sometimes when an emergency occurred normal but important routines were forgotten. The water was all right. So was the steam.

"I'm going to take a look over the stern," he said. The engine-room was under control. He smiled at Frank, an appreciative recognition of the First's quiet handling of the emergency. They were in a most grim predicament. But if the propeller was gone, it was gone, and there was no point in Abbot's wringing his hands. "I want to make sure the damned thing is gone before I report it to the Old Man. It would be embarrassing to report you'd lost your kicker and then go back and find it still there."

"Something's gone," Frank answered positively. "Either the shaft or the wheel."

ABBOT swung up the ladders and went aft. He felt the Atlantic wind chill on his bare torso and sockless feet. His flashlight continued single-mindedly along the deck.

A little knot of men was gathered aft. "The Chief," somebody said. "He's got a light."

The men opened up at the rail. Abbot focused the beam under the stern.

The sea lifted the ship and surged boldly about the counter. When the stern came up in the water, dripping, Abbot saw a plane of new-shining metal. The propeller shaft had sheared off flush where it emerged from the stern tube which housed it.

"Propeller's gone, hub, Chief?" It was the deck engineer; he sought confirmation of what he and the other men had seen in the beam of light.

"She sure is, Deck." Abbot could do no more for Deck and the solemn men who stood about than tell them the truth.

Abbot went into the after deckhouse and stuck his head into the shaft-alley escape door. He could hear water sloshing around below.

Perhaps the propeller, when it was flung off, had ripped hell out of them somewhere.

Wriggling broad shoulders through the narrow escape, the engineer descended the ladder cautiously. There was relatively little water below. The stern gland was leaking some, but there was no sign of severe damage and it continued its function of keeping the sea from entering through the stern tube. The packing in it had been shaken up when the propeller let go, but that was all.

Abbott took his time with the inspection. A man must be sure when his word was final authority. All that was needed in the alley was for the stern gland to be set up and the bilge pumped.

He went on up the alley, opened the emergency door, and told Frank Hart what he had found. It was unnecessary to tell the First what to do.

CAPTAIN MULLEN was up when Abbot got to the chartroom. "Well, good morning, Chief!" Mullen roared. Mullen was a large, ruddy, kindly man, given to jokes. He'd never harmed anyone in his life. He never pretended he was God or used authority to cover his shortcomings. He was not a bright man, but the company had finally taken pity on his plodding seniority and given him a ship. Unlike most mediocre skippers, Mullen appreciated the officers who helped him to hold on to his command.

"Good morning, Skipper," Abbot said, somewhat embarrassed. He had overruled the captain and insisted on slowing down the engine.

But while Mullen was always friendly, he was especially so now. If the engine had not been slowed down when the shaft let go, both Mullen and Abbot might have been faced with some unpleasant moments from the Coast Guard inspectors.

"A hell of a way to wake a fellow up!" Mullen yawned good-naturedly. The captain, in his crude way, was trying to make everybody feel better. The chief mate and Sparks were present.

"What you got down there, Chief—some instrument that can tell you when this old skow is getting tired on you?" Mullen went on. The poor man had no feel for a ship, himself.

"Not a good enough instrument, Skipper. It didn't tell me exactly how tired the old skow was." Mr. Creel, the chief mate, had already checked their position. Sparks stood by, waiting for a message. "The tail shaft has carried away flush with the stern tube, Skipper," Abbot reported, but he looked to the chief mate while speaking. "There's no other damage that I can tell from inside the alley."

Mr. Creel made notes on a pad. He was a

broad, thick man, in a colorful windbreaker. Creel was only 26 years old, a former football player. "Your wheel is gone, too, Chief?" he inquired.

"That's right, Mate."

"There is nothing we can do—nothing you fellows can do?" Creel knew there wasn't, but he was a make-sure Mate. The friendship between Abbot and the young mate was such that Creel did not hesitate to ask what might turn out to be a foolish question.

"Send for a towboat is all you can do, Mate!" Mullen roared the obvious conclusion. "You go ahead and make up the words."

"Yes, sir."

Mullen started from the chart room. "There's no immediate danger, Mate," he called briskly. "Be sure to get that in." And Mullen quickly left.

So used were both mate and engineer to Mullen's evading responsibility that not an eyebrow was raised. They merely appreciated the Old Man's removing himself from a situation that would only be complicated by his presence.

Abbot followed Creel back to the bridge. "What's the weather picture, Mate?" he inquired, looking over the green morning water. This was the quietest morning they had had since leaving Bremen 18 days ago. Sea and wind were moderate. The sun was on its way up, trying to break through the overcast.

"Barometer is rising, Chief," Creel answered. He looked around the horizon and searched the sky with weather eyes. Abbot, at 38, was not too old to disregard Creel's opinions merely because a short time ago Creel had been galloping around with a football under his arm. Creel already knew more about weather than Mullen would ever know.

"The glass is very slow," the chief mate went on. "That should mean good weather, when she comes up slow like that."

"Anything around us bad?"

"One off the Carolina coast. That could bother us some if we had to lay around out here. There's another one up around Newfoundland. But he shouldn't bother us. In the Northern Hemisphere they travel north."

Abbot stared stoically at the cold gray-green sea. He wondered if young Creel knew how much danger they were in.

CAPTAIN MULLEN caught Abbot when he was on his way down to quarters for a sounding tape. Abbot could hear the crackling voice of the radio and he knew that Sparky was working on the messages. "By damn, if I had a drink, I'd sure offer you one, Chief!" Mullen hailed.

Abbot had whiskey. He always had whiskey. It was important in running a ship. Whiskey

had got him parts from the Navy in the Pacific in two hours when it normally would have required three days. He had received tons of free fresh water for a little generosity with the bottle. When one of his men was dead tired, Abbot liked to give him a drink. But he could not afford to let Mullen start in on his supply.

"I would sure take it, too, Skipper," Abbot answered, but kept on hotfooting it down the ladders. He was annoyed that Mullen was pestering him before he could get done the things that should be done.

Instinctively, Abbot felt this was a situation too genuinely dangerous to be solved with a bottle.

THE message came late that afternoon. Abbot had already prepared the engineering end of the ship for a siege of disablement. His plant was cut down to one boiler to save fuel; he had his men check possible loss-spots of fresh water; the evaporator was checked and made ready for emergency use; he rechecked his galley oil supply and made plans with Frank Hart, the First, for a substitute hook-up of fuel oil if the siege ran them short of galley oil. The engineers would find a way to cook food so long as the steward's supplies held out.

Creel brought in the message. "Tug's leaving New York at eight o'clock tonight, Chief," the mate said. He handed Abbot the radiogram.

The message estimated that the tug would arrive on the evening of February 18th.

"That's over forty-eight hours of this business before we can expect a tug," Abbot observed. "What's the weather picture between New York and here, Mate?"

"The tug has two bad spots right now. There are two storms between him and us." Creel tried to ease it. "He could run around them, maybe; or they can clear."

Abbot smiled skeptically. That was the way they always figured things from ashore. So many miles to the ship, the tug made so many knots. They always figured optimistically. "If there are two storms between him and us, I wouldn't look for the tug before the evening of the nineteenth, Mate."

Creel dropped down on the settee. He fingered the radiogram which Abbot handed back to him. The barometer had started down and the position of the glass could be read in his expression. "We may be getting a little of the rough stuff tonight," he said. "Not bad, not much of it. But it will be enough to shake us up a little."

The wind blew up fresh and fast that night. It started when the sun went down and by the time the chief mate came off watch, it was work-

ing up to good force. The sea had not yet got a chance to run, but moderate as it was, the light, disabled ship rolled heavily.

Creel came into the Chief's cabin with his after-watch sandwich and coffee. He said: "This won't last long, Chief." They were in the trough as Creel spoke; he had to brace himself and balance his coffee.

They heard gear break loose in the quarters below: drawers, chairs, pans, and something like a strike of ninepins dumped on the deck.

Abbot clung to a porthole dog and looked with face against the glass into the turmoil. "She's cranky, Mate. Awful cranky."

"Aye, Chief. It makes a big difference not having the engines to fight it."

After a while, the rain came screaming and began to beat down the sea. Creel got a second cup of coffee and nursed it thoughtfully. "I think we're going to be in trouble," he observed, leaving for his cabin. "If we get a real blow, we're going to have a tough time to survive."

"It's going to be rough, all right—if we get a good blow."

As soon as the mate was gone, Abbot locked the door of his cabin and dug into his technical books. He had a goodly pile of them, which he kept in a sea chest, along with a set of machinist and electrical tools. He was looking for information on the handling of a disabled ship.

His Bible, Osbourne's *Modern Marine Engineer's Manual*, was of little use, as were the other engineering volumes. A tail shaft usually carried away because of corrosion, erosion, defective material or stress. At the last annual overhaul the tail shaft had been magna-fluxed and the wedge was 1/32".

He was sound with the inspectors. His engine had been slowed, his engineers standing a throttle watch.

But what he wanted was not this engineering stuff, which he knew. He wanted to know what could be done with a disabled ship.

THERE was a book concealed among the engineering volumes. Before he took it out of hiding, Abbot checked the door bolt. Captain Mullen was prejudiced against books; it would be diplomatic if the Captain did not see this one.

Abbot took the *Merchant Marine Officers' Handbook* from his chest, seated himself at his rolling desk, and began. He went through the index, turned to page 236, and the topic *Engines Broken Down in Heavy Weather*.

As he read on, this topic and the following ones, Abbot, whose eyes were perfectly good, bent stoop-shouldered over the book.

A knock came at the door. It was two thumps, followed by a drag of knuckles down the door. This was Mullen's signal.

"Just a minute, Skipper." Abbot snapped the book shut, went into his cabin, dropped the book into his sea chest, and closed the lid. Then he opened the door to Mullen.

"Getting ready to turn in, Chief?" the captain asked jovially.

"Yep. Figure we've had the worst we're going to have tonight."

Mullen dropped down on the office settee. "Well, Chief, we got through the first one all right," he beamed cheerfully.

INSIDE, Abbot was annoyed. He no longer got mad with Mullen. How could you get mad with a man who had all the decent virtues and no serious fault but stupidity? The poor man did the best he could with the equipment that God had given him. Mullen was what he was. A wise man recognized this and went on from there, appreciating the substantial good things about the Old Man.

But it seemed impossible that the captain had not seen how the ship had rolled in only a moderate sea. A man with a half a brain must sense they were going to be in trouble if worse weather came.

"What was your roll, Skipper?"

"I don't know, Chief." Mullen got up and waddled to the phone. "I'll call the Third Mate and find out."

Mullen spoke on the phone. "The mate says we hit somewhere around thirty-eight degrees," the captain said. "That's not bad." Mullen grinned sheepishly. "Hell, that's good! So good that if I had a drink, I'd celebrate."

Abbot's face went briefly stern. Didn't the poor seniority fool realize that what he should be thinking about was how to prepare the ship for whatever the Atlantic threw at them? "Coffee will do me until this skow hauls by Ambrose," the Chief said. He made it strong enough to be definite that he was not letting Mullen into his whiskey. . . .

The tug did not arrive on the evening of the 18th, nor did the Atlantic climb off their backs. A gray darkness always possessed the sky; the wind would come and go, and with it rain in a whipping deluge. Men got woozy stomachs from the rolling.

It was not until the morning of the 20th that the tug arrived and attempted to hook up. The small vessel came up slowly from aft, a patch of red creeping through the gray mists. She kept a respectful safe distance from the ship.

"Chief, isn't that little old thing nothing but a harbor tug?" the deck engineer inquired. Abbot stood with Frank Hart at the rail.

The deck engineer was right. The North Atlantic was inflamed with low-pressure spots and boiling storms. The gray air was electric

with cries for help from troubled ships. New York harbor had been drained of sea-going tugs in the emergency.

"It's the best they could get us ashore," Abbot answered. "They claim this is the biggest tug they could find in the harbor."

The tug came up and gingerly eased ahead of them. The small red craft was having her own troubles with the sea. The *Bixby's* motions, against the wide expanse of sea and sky, had seemed sluggish enough. But as the tug came under her bow, the lunges of the ship appeared in their true fast, dangerous perspective.

Frank Hart, the First, standing beside Ab-



bot, said: "I wouldn't trade places with the tugboat guys."

The tug clawed frantically on the waves. A man stood in her stern with a gun. Creel and his deck gang waited on the bow of the *Bixby*. The man with the gun braced himself and fired.

The line, led by a brass projectile, snaked out beautifully over the *Bixby's* bow.

Creel's men got the line. Quickly they hauled in a stouter line. This would bring in the hawser.

The sea got the tug, and despite her throbbing engines, whipped her into a wild lunge.

The line snapped.

The tug maneuvered and the man with the gun did his shooting all over again.

This time the hawser made it and the boat-swain leaped on top of the bitt and spread his arms in sign: "All secure!"

Now the tug payed out hawser and respectfully put distance between herself and the ship. Abbot started toward the bridge.

"Hurrah!" he heard one of his black gang shout on the deck behind him. The oiler leaped joyously into the air. "New York bound!"

Abbot made a check of the bridge telemotor. A sailor had the wheel hard over. Mullen was standing by, an immense grin brightening his face. "Well, I guess we're on our way, Chief!" he exclaimed.

"That general direction, I guess, Skipper." The telemotor was all right. But something else Abbot saw was not. "What has this guy promised you, Skipper?" he asked, looking out on the little harbor tug straining ahead.

"Four or five knots at least, Chief. When he gets us pulled up to speed, maybe a little more. It might be five-and-a-half or six knots."

Before Mullen could hit him up for a celebrative drink, Abbot hurried from the pilothouse and went aft. He went down to the steering-engine room. The quadrant was hard over. It stayed there.

After a while, Abbot came up and had a look at the rudder. It was still hard over, a useless drag at the stern. The tug's feeble effort was insufficient to give them steerage.

The jubilant oiler was slapping men on the back and shouting about New York when Abbot returned along the deck.

The Chief went into his quarters, busied himself with paper work, and sat tight for developments. All at once, he felt a sudden strange motion. It was a shock that was not a shock, a feeling of release of power, a totally different feeling from any motion the sea had imparted.

Creel soon came in. "Anybody tell you, Chief?" the chief mate asked glumly.

"No. Nobody needed to tell me. I felt it when it happened."

"The hawser parted."

"We were never pulled on course, were we, Mate?"

"No. He never quite made it, chief." . . .

An hour later, Captain Mullen came in. The spirit of optimism burned as cheerfully as ever about him. "How would you like to take a vacation in Bermuda, Chief?" he hailed.

Abbot squinted at the captain. Surely, Mullen must be a praying man. A friendly providence must indeed watch over Mullen's brainless head.

Bermuda was all right with Abbot. It was the nearest port. "When do we start?" he joked back.

"Tomorrow morning, Chief!" Mullen exclaimed in fine form.

Abbot looked at Mullen more closely. The captain was not joking. "When did all this happen?"

"About five minutes ago. The tug captain says it's impossible for him to pull us into a continental United States port under present weather conditions. He recommends going into Bermuda. I agree with him. I wired the company five minutes ago. Sparks is sending off the message now."

This was fine with Abbot. Anything to get the ship in safe. But the company might have other ideas. Bermuda might not be included.

"I wonder what Universal Shipping will have to say about Bermuda, Skipper?" The optimism of Mullen infected him somewhat, but Abbot added cautiously: "Universal may have plans for us in New York."

Mullen did not sit down. "Ah, no, Chief! They wouldn't countermand my orders." The Captain was keyed-up and happy. He knew that everybody would be relieved at this Bermuda news. He was bursting at the seams to spread the good word. "I'll go see your engineers, Chief!" he exclaimed, heading down the alley. "They ought to be happy about Bermuda."

The engineers were happy; everybody was. The wind to Bermuda was now fair; within three days, even with the harbor tug's feeble towing, the *Bixby* could be safe in port.

But at supper, when all the ship was gay with relief, Captain Mullen failed to appear. Mullen was usually a man of good appetite. And when Creel came down, the story was written in the young mate's face.

"The Old Man sick?" Abbot whispered across the table.

"I guess he's not feeling too well," Creel answered sympathetically. The captain had made a fool of himself and the young mate felt sorry for him. "He got a fast radio message back from the office."

Abbot knew. The company had ordered Mullen to bring the ship to New York. A stronger skipper would have told the company to kiss his foot; but a man riding strictly on seniority did not disobey company orders.

"The tug going to try it again tomorrow, Mate?"

"Weather permitting, he will, Chief." The chief mate had no faith in the harbor tug; neither did Abbot. "We're going to try it again with our anchor chain and part of his hawser," Creel explained. "A bastard hook-up."

IT WAS all foredoomed to failure. The tugboat captain had put himself on record as finding it impossible to tow the *Bixby* into New York, so it was impossible. And now came warnings of weather which the tugboat skipper had feared.

Creel was following the weather closely. Even as they made hook-up next day, it was an undertaking without faith. "He's pulling us

right into a low-pressure area, Chief," the chief mate confided. "He has orders to drop us when it gets too tough for him."

"Anything rougher than we've had, Mate?" Abbot inquired.

"A whole lot rougher, Chief." Creel spoke in an even, cool voice. He never exaggerated. "There are winds of hurricane force due us. What's going to happen is that it's going to hit us, the tug will cut us loose, and we'll be adrift in winds of Force Twelve."

Abbot was scared. Quite frankly, he was scared. He had been through several hurricanes, but never on a disabled ship.

"What's the worst we've had, Mate?" he asked. "On wind?"

"Nothing over Force Eight so far, Chief."

"Our biggest roll so far?"

"Forty-nine degrees."

make it easy

I HAVE found that a stopped-up sink, bathtub or lavatory drain, can usually be opened by putting a two-foot or three-foot length of speedometer cable in my 1/4" portable electric drill, or in my egg-beater-type hand drill, and working it down the drain while turning.

—Frank Gallagher, Aurora, Colo.

Abbot paced to the porthole, braced himself with a hand on a dog, and stared out. Oily gray-green rollers cascaded up and down and it could not be told that the ship was under tow.

"You're sure of your Force Twelve winds, Mate?"

"We can't miss. Not the way we're headed. The tugboat skipper saw it yesterday. That's why he said Bermuda."

Abbot knew now that they were going to get it. "If she rolled forty-nine degrees in a Force Eight wind, Mate, what's she going to roll in a Force Twelve?"

Creel sat with his broad football shoulders hunched. His head was bowed forward. He took his time about answering. "I don't think we can take it, Chief."

Abbot went into his cabin. "I don't think we can either—the way we're ballasted." He opened the lid of his sea chest and took out the *Merchant Marine Officers' Handbook*. He opened it to pages 236-37, and passed the book to the Mate.

Creel grinned and shoved the book back. "I have a copy. I've been reading the same place you have."

"Some right good reading, don't you think?"
 "Excellent reading."

"I like this idea: 'Fill every available double-bottom tank and flood an after hold.'"

"I go for that, Chief. Fill Number Five to just below the top of the tunnel. The tunnel can act as a swash plate."

"Right, Mate. I've kept everything I could in my department—fuel and fresh water—aft. We've been taking the sea a little on the tail. Filling Number Five will turn her butt to it just a little more. It ought to give us enough to stay out of the trough."

CREEL nodded his blunt face thoughtfully. They both knew what to do, but both knew the obstacle standing in the way. "Mullen won't go for flooding Number Five," Creel said. "I talked to him when we were first disabled. He doesn't want to make a mess in the hold."

Abbot knew this. Nobody liked to flood a hold. But when a hold had to be flooded, it had to be flooded. Abbot went out of the cabin, toward the first-engineer's cabin. He brought Frank Hart back with him.

"The Mate and I are talking high politics, First," he explained.

"It's about time," Hart said. He already knew Abbot's plans.

"Force Twelve is coming after us, First. We can't play with Mullen any longer."

"We've played too long already," Hart said.

Creel stood up, grasped the back of the chair, and leaned with his wide shoulders forward. Some of the football was beginning to come out under the stress. "We'll go together to Mullen. We'll beat his head in." Pride of position and responsibility was in the mate. "The lives of a bunch of guys are in our hands. We have to do what's right by the ship. We'd be some officers to sit up here and let the ship go to hell just because the captain hasn't got the guts to rub the office the wrong way."

The room was quiet. The only sounds were the rhythmic outside sloshing of the sea and the groans of straining metal. The authority of a captain is a great and powerful authority.

"Mullen is a good guy," Hart said at last. "Nobody's trying to take that away from him. But he has no head."

"The Old Man is weak," Creel said.

"The best favor we could do him is beat his head in," Hart argued softly but firmly. "Get the ship ballasted right and do the best we can to keep afloat out here."

"That's what we're here for," Abbot answered. "To take care of the ship." The First was taut and the chief mate was taut. Abbot grinned at them. He had been going to sea since he was 16. Experience had taught him that

the simplest way to do a job was often the best way. He disliked making a fuss about any job that could be done quietly.

"We will take care of the ship," he reaffirmed. "But I see no point in hurting the Old Man's feelings." The smile on his face was tolerant and kind. "All we have to do is anesthetize the Old Man. I've got enough whiskey to keep him drunk for the duration—unless the mate's Force Twelver lasts longer than a hurricane wind usually blows." . . .

He got no response when he knocked hard on the closed door of the captain's office. Abbot went to the door of the stateroom. The Chief's signal still got no response.

"Skipper!" Abbot shouted. His voice and banging let it be known that he meant to do business.

"Yes. Just a minute, Chief."

There was some little time before the captain opened the door.

Mullen had a red bathrobe around him. His face was faded from a healthy redness to a nasty white. The room was close. "Trying to get me some rest, Chief," Mullen said. He forced a sick smile.

"Why not?" Abbot said kindly. "Everybody has had enough of this business to knock him out." There was no time to fool around. "I guess you know what's coming, Skipper?"

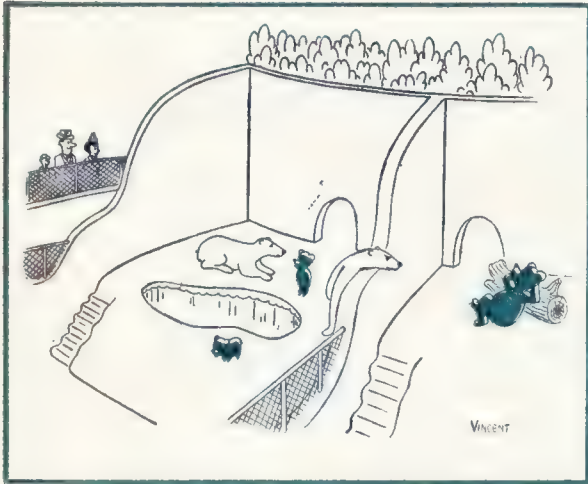
Mullen did not look at the engineer. "I knew it yesterday, Chief. Why do you think I wanted to go into Bermuda?"

"Ah, it's crazy!" Abbot pulled the bottle from his jacket and wedged it between the mattress and the bunk frame. The ship was rolling too much to trust a bottle alone. "With what the office has done to us, I think we rate a drink, Skipper." Abbot reached into the captain's shaving-locker, dragged forth two tumblers and rinsed them.

Mullen planted his feet wide in firm grip on the deck. The worry went from his face and his big hands began to shake eagerly. "I thought you'd come through, Chief," the captain said with doglike gratitude.

THEY pushed the ballasting to meet the storm.

Creel kept good holds. The rose boxes already had burlap strainers cemented over the strainer plates. There wasn't too much to be done from the mate's end. He sent a gang of sailors into Number Five and had them sweep the hold thoroughly. Here the heavy weather had helped: loose debris and dirt had already been rolled down from beams and overhangs. The Mate had the lower sweat-battens removed and secured: they could get into trouble if loose lumber floated about and chewed up. Then all



their strainers would not save them from difficulty on the pump-out.

Abbot assigned the second engineer to fill the double bottoms that were not filled. Into the shaft alley quietly disappeared Frank Hart with an open-ended wrench; he removed the bonnets from two bilge valves, took out the non-return discs, and closed the bonnets again. Then he went into the engine room and opened a series of valves that would permit the sea to gravitate in.

Abbot stood at the bottom of Number Five Hold with his flashlight. He watched the water ooze up from the burlap-covered rose boxes—the strainers on pipe openings—and begin its slow spread. He looked at his wrist watch and made calculations against the time that night when the storm was due to strike.

He climbed up the long dark ladders, went to the steering-engine phone, and rang the engine room. Hart was standing-by there.

"We're getting it, all right, First," he said. "But not fast enough. I'd use the pump. Hold the pump pressure down to about forty pounds so we don't knock off the burlap."

The Chief climbed back into Number Five. Swaying to the rolling, he balanced himself on the tunnel top. Under the dark water creeping upward, the burlap bellied in the beam of light. The sacking was holding.

Abbot was thinking beyond the storm. As quietly as they were pumping the water in, they would want to pump it out. He did not want to use hoses and advertise to the ship that the hold was being flooded. . . .

The falling glass was working on the nervous system of the tug captain.

At supper time Sparks poked his head into the saloon and said: "He's hollering his head off up there for the Old Man. He wants the Old Man to acknowledge a message."

Creel slowly wiped his mouth with a napkin. Abbot and Hart smiled grim support across the table. "I'll get it, Sparky," Creel said. He got up hurriedly and struck out for the radio room.

"Like to nominate him for Skipper," Hart said.

"He's skipper material, all right," Abbot answered. "We're lucky we've got him aboard."

The whistle bleated in signal topside. It meant Creel had the message.

Soon the mate came down. "The tugboat is putting it on record," he said. "He'll hold onto us as long as he can. But if it gets too rough, he'll have to cut us loose." . . .

The wind came first. It did not strike full force all at once, but came winging out of the darkness with slow-rising power.

"Captain!" shouted the tugboat skipper. "Stand by! We've got to turn you loose!"

The *Bixby's* radio blared this voice beyond the shack and into quarters.

Creel acknowledged the message with a signal blast.

The tug gathered up his part of the hawser; he came back close and was a frantic three-quarters of an hour doing whatever he was doing with the line. Before he was finished, the rain came, and the small light hopping about on the sea called back, "Good luck!" and disappeared in the driving rain.

"I'm glad he's gone," Creel remarked. He and Abbot were feeling the ship with their legs and bodies. "I hate a guy riding on my back waiting for a chance to hop off."

"The poor little hooker is going to have a tough time of it himself," Abbot said. In waterproof jacket and steaming cap, flashlight ready, he stood in the pilothouse with the mate.

It was not just as they had planned it. They had expected the ship to fall off cleanly at the bow and meet the brunt of the storm somewhere along her stern quarter as she was cast adrift in the storm. But now fathoms of anchor chain, cast loose by the tug, dragged at the *Bixby's* bow.

Legs propped apart, the two men watched from the pilothouse. The windshield wipers beat a slow rhythm across their vision. When a sea swept bursting over the forecandlehead, Creel grunted: "Even now it would be bad to try to work men forward there."

"Um," Abbot acknowledged. If they were going to do anything about the anchor chain, they must do it now. And even now to do anything might cost the lives of men.

"I have extra lifelines rigged there forward," Creel volunteered. "If we have to do it . . ." The mate stood ready to lead in doing what had to be done.

Abbot, feeling the ship as much as he was

watching her, was becoming less concerned about the anchor chain. It was possible that it would stabilize the ship some. Creel was bothered because the chain had thrust itself unwanted into their theoretical plans. Abbot, the practical man, was concerned with only how the ship was behaving.

"Let's take a look aft, Mate," he said. "Let's see how she's taking it."

They forced open a door and clawed up to the rail aft.

Holding to the rail, the two men watched the lay of the ship intently. And after a while, because the wind made talking difficult, they looked at each other's wind-whipped faces and grinned. Anchor chain hanging or no, the *Bixby* was taking the storm beautifully. When a gust of terrible strength screamed over, the bow would go easing with it. The stern held to the water like a weathervane. Number Five Hold had her!

Whether the ship would live or die, they did not know. But they did know that they had fulfilled their duties as seamen.

THE glass was still falling. It stood at 28.72 when Abbot came back from the bridge. He stopped in with Sparks. Sparks held onto a cup of coffee and tormented the set.

"The second T-2 tanker has cracked-up up the coast," Sparky volunteered. "The *Loam Hills* is gone. The bow is lost; they're trying to save the men on the stern."

All around them ships were in trouble or sinking. Fishing boats were foundering with casual anonymity. Only the names of the big ships got in the news. But the foundering fishing boats sank just as deep and their men died just as dead.

"Any more from our Liberty friend?" Abbot asked. Only 40 miles away was the *Rachel Swenson* and she was in trouble.

"The Coast Guard is headed to him. He's hollering hurry. He claims he's breaking up."

This was bad stuff. Sparky was eating it up. He was only 24 and this was the first time he had sat in the middle of this kind of thing. "How the hell is it, Chief?" Sparky said. "All these other ships are sending out distress calls and nobody aboard this ship seems to give a damn? Ships with engines are cracking up and this ship without an engine doesn't seem to give a damn?"

Abbot grinned sagely. It was a false smile, but he had his duty. Part of it was to spread sweet confidence. "Maybe it's the engines that are cracking them up, Sparky. You can get into a hell of a lot of trouble just by driving a ship into a storm."

Now he descended to his own deck, went out the lee door, and edged his way to the after corner

of the deckhouse. Wind, rain and spindrift drove screaming by him, but he could thrust his nose into it and see what was going on.

The ship felt good. It was amazing what a difference proper ballasting had made in her. She had cut out the cranky foolishness. A kind of assuring solidity was about her, but this feeling he had had in the pilothouse with the mate must be verified.

For a good time he stood alone. The mechanics were beautiful to observe. Towering waves came crashing through the blackness and broke in phosphorescence bright as fire. The wind grabbed the spray and hurled it horizontally across the ocean until there was no telling which was the sea from beneath and the rain from above.

But what he saw—and here was the beauty of it—was that the higher the wind rose the sweeter the ship met it. The bow would lean and fall away, but the stern hung grimly to the teeth of the gale.

A freak sea could undo them. Or structural failure as in the cracked-up T-2s, the cracking *Rachel Swenson*—the *Bixby* was not a supership. On Coast Guard orders her hull had been strengthened with a belly-band, but so had the hulls of the tankers and the *Rachel*.

Give the *Bixby* enough of a pounding . . . Creel was in the office when Abbot went back to his cabin. The mate was in oilskins and sea-boots. He had his oilskins open. Creel was munching a sandwich. "I think we pretty well got our ballasting on the nose," he observed.

"Yes. We did all right on that, Mate. How's your glass?"

"Still going down. It was 28.64 just before I came down."

Abbot stripped off his jacket and cap and dried his face with a towel. "If we get through this one, I think we ought to start thinking about getting this ship in, Mate. We can't lay around out here forever and take poundings like this."

NO call for help had ever been sent to the Coast Guard. And every report to the office had carried Mullen's bright optimism: *No immediate danger*.

"I'm working on that idea now," Creel answered. "I'm not too proud to be towed in by the Coast Guard."

"No." Abbot had gone along with the tradition of holding the tow for private enterprise, of letting the towboat people make a living. But a proper mess had been made of it by private enterprise. It had been a mistake from the start. When they were first disabled, all effort should have been concentrated on getting the ship in. "Anything to get her in, mate . . ."

Now, above the groans of straining metal

and the rhythmic sea pounding, there boomed a foreign force. It slammed against the superstructure like a brick wall flying on the wind. The ship shook and quivered; and Abbot and Creel staggered and nearly lost their balance.

"A freak sea," Creel said.

"Yeah. A heavy-duty one, too, Mate."

Creel ducked toward the door. "Got to see if it got my lifeboats."

The buzzer from the engine room went off. Abbot leaped to it.

"Chief, come get the hell down here!" cried the oiler over the tube. "Some goddamned thing has carried away! We're getting water down here on our heads!"

Abbot grabbed his light and ran for the ladders. It was ominous that the oiler had called and not the engineer. Was the third assistant tied-up trying to do something or had he been hurt?

Had a plate been smashed in?

As Abbot slid downward, he saw the third engineer on the second grating from the bottom, coming from the fireroom. The Third had a flashlight in his hand and water was dripping from his clothes.

"It's nothing, Chief," the Third said. "We took one around the stack." The Third was apologetic. "The oiler jumped the gun and called you."

"That's all right, Third," Abbot said. He was annoyed, but it was not the Third's fault. The men were getting jumpy under the storm pressure. . . .

Creel had returned from seeing that the freak sea had not torn loose any of his lifeboats. A fresh batch of oilskin water was dripping onto the deck. Now Sparks came into the Chief's office. "The office wants to know what the hell is the matter with us," Sparky said. He passed Creel a radiogram.

"I didn't know anybody was awake around there at night," Abbot said.

"I think they are—tonight." Creel shoved the message to Abbot.

The message was to the point: NO REPORT TODAY WHY.

"Thanks, Sparks," Creel said. "I'll get hold of the Old Man. We'll see if we can make the office happy."

Sparks went out and Creel went on: "That's the angle I've been working on. Let the office do a little worrying."

"You sent no report today?"

"No." Creel smiled faintly. "And the Captain sent no report. There was no *no immediate danger* sent today."

This was good, Abbot thought. This was very good. Already Creel was waging psychologi-

cal warfare with the front office. But the mate would have to be careful not to get the Old Man in trouble ashore, while trying to keep the ship afloat at sea. "Will you be able to cover for the skipper?" Abbot asked. "Ashore, I mean?"

"I'll be able to cover. Don't worry about that, Chief." Creel made ready to go out. "But I think we ought to go have a look at him before I start writing messages. Let me get my passkey."

The mate rapped hard and shouted: "Mate, Skipper!"

No sign of life came from inside.

Creel turned the passkey and he and Abbot went in.

Mullen was stretched out on the deck. Maybe he had rolled out of the bunk or maybe he had been unable to crawl in. He was doing all right where he was. He had a pillow under his head. The pillow seemed the only thing that had suffered. It had been scrounged around the deck until it looked as if it had been dragged through the uptakes. Mullen was flat on his back and from his chest heaved great snorty snores.

"No pain," Creel said gently. "No pain whatsoever."

"He's beaten it," Abbot said. "Beat it all."

Stuck between the mattress and the bunk was a bottle with about a gill still left in it. An empty bottle had spilled out of the upturned wastebasket and rolled to some security in the corner between the bunk and locker.

Abbot looked at these signs. "What do you think, Mate?" The Chief removed the fresh unopened bottle he had concealed in his jacket. "Do you think we should add the risk of alcoholic poisoning to our other crimes?"

"You can't poison him—not with alcohol. I'd keep feeding it to him, Chief. He's best out of the way like this so the crew won't see him. The worst thing that could happen now would be for him to start running around looking for whiskey."

Creel took a gray blanket from the bunk and covered the captain. Abbot stuck the fresh soldier in the mattress by the near-dead one.

THE glass was still falling when they came from the captain's quarters. It stood at 28.52. As they left the chartroom, the third mate tagged Creel. "The ship's bell has carried away, Mate," the Third reported in a woeful voice.

Creel was a calm man. But he stared at the Third and a slight look of shock came over his face. The loss of the bell was negligible, the shock was in how abruptly the sea laid claim. "The big bell forward?"

"Aye. A sea smashed it off and carried it over the side."

Creel was having a regular heavy-weather patrol maintained. "No other damage?" he asked, and his voice sought escape from the lost bell.

"No. No other damage, Mate. Just the bell."

"Write it in your log, Third," Creel said. "We'll want to collect heavy-weather insurance for it."

CREEL and Abbot proceeded to the chief mate's cabin. Radio blanks were already there. A message was composed: CAST LOOSE BY TUG 8:21 TONIGHT HEAVY WEATHER. SEA NOW PRECIPITOUS WIND 12. BAROMETER 28.52 FALLING. ADVISE. MASTER BIXBY.

"That ought to start some action," Abbot observed, when the draft was complete. This sort of thing was new to him; his contact with the office was mostly through the port engineers.

"If somebody with some sense gets hold of it, it will," Creel said. He made ready to go out. "Want to come up to the captain with me again, Chief?"

Abbot understood. The mate wanted to give Sparks the impression that a consultation had been held in Mullen's cabin and this message was what had evolved from it. . . .

Creel hung over the chart desk piecing together the weather picture from Sparky's reports. He looked tired.

"What the hell are you going to be, Mate?" Abbot shot at him. The Chief had come up from a round of the engine-room. "A dopey hero or an alert chief mate?"

Creel continued to study his charts. "No rest for the wicked, they say, Chief. I guess I must be just plain evil."

Abbot sensed that the ship was riding easier. He had noticed it some time ago and now he was certain. "Don't you think you ought to get a little rest?"

"I plan to," Creel answered softly. "I want to get a catnap before we get into the worst of it."

Abbot cocked his head quizzically sideways. Was Creel saying, *There's still worse to come?* "I thought it was easing up some, Mate."

"It is, right now. We're close to the center." Creel nodded toward the barometer. It stood at 28.42. "We're just about hit center now. We've come through one side of it. We've still got the other side."

It had been the Chief's experience that a ship usually went through one nasty spot in a storm and the bad was over. "You mean the tail-end of this thing is going to be worse than we've already had, Mate?"

Creel put his pencil in the rack and secured his papers. "Our worst weather is still ahead of us, Chief. Ordinarily, with a live ship, you maneuver to keep out of the bad side of it. All

we can do is lay here and take what comes. We won't get our worst weather until about four o'clock in the morning." . . .

Abbot tried to sleep. He was pleased that the last he had seen of Creel was of the mate in a pair of striped shorts. If the worst was to come at four o'clock, a couple of hours rest would fit them to face it.

But now as Abbot, wedged in his bunk with a life-belt shoring up the outside of the mattress so the rolling wouldn't toss him, sought to be ready for the big blow, Creel came in. He was still in his striped shorts.

"I guess we dood it," he said happily, handing Abbot a radiogram.

It was from the office. CG CUTTER LARKIN ARRIVING 7 THIS MORNING STAND-BY YOU, it read. CG TUG DIGGER ARRIVING 7 THIS EVENING TOW YOU GOOD LUCK.

Abbot pulled himself free from the wedging life-belt. Some of the message he could not be-

make it easy

Gold-plated watch bands, as well as other gold articles, get that "new look" when immersed for a half minute in a solution made of two parts hydrogen peroxide and one part household ammonia. Fred A. Thompson, Detroit, Mich.

lieve. He understood that the company had come to its senses when it got their message, and had notified the Coast Guard. But one thing seemed impossible. "How the hell is the Coast Guard going to get here that fast, Mate?"

Creel had had time to figure it out. "They must be out here already. The Coast Guard knows it's bad; they're nosing around out here for anybody who needs help."

Abbot slid from the bunk. The cutter standing by would be useless in the weather they were in. And the tug would be useless tonight unless the weather cleared fast. But the lift his men would get would be tremendous.

"All right to give this message to my men?" he asked. Before passing along such messages, it was courtesy to ask the skipper. Now he instinctively extended the same courtesy to Creel. "They'll sure be glad to hear it."

"Oh sure, Chief!" Creel exclaimed. He ducked toward the door in his striped shorts, gooseflesh chill on his stout legs. "I'm going to tell all my men." . . .

Abbot meant to sleep. It was the sensible thing. If they could hold against the other side

of the storm, they would probably be all right. The problem after that would be to straighten out Mullen, to sober him up and get him shaved and clean and looking like a skipper.

But he could not sleep. Even focusing his mind far ahead would do no good. He heard the roar of the wind working up again. One-hundred-and-five miles an hour it would be, according to the bulletins. He had been through worse, but not without damage. It did not seem that they would get through this without the Atlantic taking some toll.

Outside in the passageways, he could hear the slosh of water. It meant the sea was driving somehow through the weather-stripping of the doors. And then somebody was bailing in the passageways.

The four-o'clock promise began to come true. The ship began to lean heavily leeward. The wind pressed her down and held her. The sighing and groaning of her metal took on a new rhythm. The increasing wind outside made everything about the ship relatively quieter. It was as if the ship, was locked in mortal combat, must for her survival conserve even the energy of a groan.

OUT of this hushed battle came a super-structure-shaking crash. The bunk below Abbot shuddered. Then there was a dragging on the deck as the *Bixby* rolled the other way. This dragging ended in a balance of forces. Then a force again jerked the ship.

Abbot jumped into his slippers. He knew he could not get from the windward door to where he heard the crash. He went out the lee door and pulled his way by handrail to windward.

Something was pounding against the side of the ship like a slow, monstrous battering-ram.

He could see flashlights and figures moving. In the blue rain, Creel and sailors were crouched, fighting a tangle of ropes.

The after lifeboat was gone. The forward lifeboat dangled end-down over the side. The tarpaulin cover bellied the wind, flapping its loose flippers like a crazed seal. Oars and cans of provisions were flying about, and on each roll, the hull of the lifeboat smashed at the side of the ship.

Abbot ran back to his cabin, snatched open a locker, and grabbed a razor-sharp packing knife. The mate would hate to lose the lifeboat; even in the moment the Chief had watched, he could see Creel was trying to figure some way not to lose it. Probably the mate was thinking of catching a sling about the boat and pulling it secure—and thinking of the risk of life.

The watch oiler was in the alley when Abbot ran from his cabin. "What is it, Chief?" the oiler

cried, and Abbot knew the watch in the engine room was alarmed.

"A couple of lifeboats have carried away. Tell the First it's all right."

Creel was frozen to the davit when Abbot clawed his way to him. Even this was a foolish action. The davit itself, under double weight, could easily carry away.

Wordlessly, Abbot banged his hand against Creel's hand. He did not look toward the mate's face, but banged his hand with the handle of the knife.

Creel opened his hand and slowly his fingers curled around the knife. It was a sad thing and Creel did not do it at once. He stood undecided and watched the slam of the boat against the ship.

Then, because above the wind a voice could not be heard, the mate waved the knife. In the arc of the lights the signal was clear: "Stand clear—everybody!"

Creel sawed on the rope, there was a singing of sheaves, the scraunch of metal, and a splash which the wild wind whipped away. A few moments later the boat was flung again against the bow of the ship, and from it was heard no more.

"I've lost my boats," Creel said, when they forced their way back to Abbot's cabin. Creel was hunched over and spoke slowly. Water dripped from his striped shorts and globules of water clustered on his goosefleshed legs.

"You've lost nothing, Mate!" Abbot shouted at him fiercely.

"I've lost the boats."

The sea madness bounced the ship and mate and engineer reeled against the bulkhead. When they recovered, Abbot plucked a towel from the rack and gave it to Creel. "I've lost the boats," Creel repeated and he did not rub himself with the towel.

ABBOT pushed him into his lashed-down chair. "Dry yourself off and let's get some coffee, Mate. You've lost nothing important." The bad side of the storm had them now and only a ship could live in it. "What the hell good would the lifeboats be to us, anyhow? They would be completely useless in this." Abbot's voice softened and he spoke out of other rough experiences with the sea. "As a matter of fact, I'm glad to see us lose those two damned boats. I didn't expect to get through this without damage. Maybe they'll appease the sea gods."

Creel's attention started back. He looked at the Chief warily, wondering if Abbot believed this old superstitious nonsense or was pulling the mate's leg. "You really believe in such things?" The mate began to rough-towel his drenched head and limbs.

"Why not, Mate? Within the next couple of hours Davey Jones will either get us or he won't. Maybe the boats will throw him off our trail until morning."

In the next two hours the storm's intensity slowly increased. The *Bixby* lunged, and rose, slid down, and shuddered in the crash of raging enormous water. The wild pitch of the wind screamed higher, and again the plates were groaning in anguish.

Abbot wedged himself into his bunk. He and everyone else had done what they could. They'd make it, or they wouldn't.

He flicked the bunk switch. In the darkness, he held and waited. . . .

He was aware of glaring light. He struggled up. Sunlight was pouring through the portholes. The sea was still heavy, but the wind was down, and the sun stood over the horizon. A clean, wholesome sun.

The *Bixby* had lived through the night.

THE Coast Guard cutter *Larkin* came promptly at seven in the morning, but she did not stand-by—under proper ballasting, the *Bixby* was riding all right. The *Larkin* went on to rescue the little tug that had turned the *Bixby* adrift. The tug's engines were broken down, her antenna swept away, her pilothouse glass smashed. She was in worse shape than the ship she had been sent to rescue.

In the evening, before seven, the tug *Digger* of the Coast Guard arrived. The sea had abated much under a day of sun. The *Digger* had power and sound towing gear. Before midnight, both the *Bixby* and the tug were being pulled toward Ambrose Light at a good clip. As Abbot's pumps threw out the ballast, speed worked up. They were doing 12 knots by the time Number Five Hold was dry.

Then they went to work on Mullen.

The shipyard was full of the Atlantic's work. A group of freighters were in for heavy-weather repairs. A few ships over from the *Bixby* lay the stern end of the *Loam Hills*, one of the crack-up tankers. The stern was all that was left of the once-fine tankship.

Captain Mullen had the deck. "I learned a lot from the experience," the captain declared in a hearty voice. He was shaved, his conventional dark suit brimming traditional stability. If his face was still a little swollen from the booze bout, nobody noticed. The coarseness could have been from storm and worry. "I'll never be afraid again of a ship breaking down in heavy weather," the captain pontificated.

Abbot's office was crowded with port engineers, shipyard supervisors, and people who had come down from the office to congratulate Mullen. The manager of operations was aboard.

All of them listened with the guilty attention of people who had not been in the Atlantic.

"That's what happened to that T-2 tanker," Captain Mullen continued, solemnly nodding in the direction of the remains of the *Loam Hills*. "Her skipper didn't know how to handle her. He shoved her into it and she broke on him." The captain, a good talker, paused for emphasis. "Now, if I had been aboard her, I would just have stopped my engines and let her ride it out."

Creel stood in the doorway. His expression was a veiled one. Sometimes it isn't easy for the intelligent young to accept the ways of the older generation.

Abbot excused himself and escaped the room. He pushed young Creel playfully ahead of him.

"That horseradish is a little hard to take, isn't it, Chief?" Creel said. "Wait until he tries to ride out a hurricane sometime on his own. Without even knowing we were ballasted, let alone how."

Abbot strode toward the mate's cabin. "The Old Man is blowing smoke," he said. "That's part of his job—to keep the office smoked up and happy. He knows much more than you give him credit for." The Chief opened Creel's locker where he had ditched the stuff. "I got seven bottles to take out of the two cases, Mate. That's what Papa drank up on me. Then we divide the other."

CREEL looked at the whiskey. He knew who had donated it. The mild disgust in his bearing began to ease.

Despite all the press of docking details, and all the elite shore company, Mullen had somehow found time to squeeze in an order. "That must have been the first thing he did—order whiskey."

"It was, Mate." Abbot's voice was warm with affection. "The Old Man hasn't got much on the ball, but he recognizes it. And he's appreciative to anybody who helps him."

Creel held up a bottle of Scotch and admired it. "Talk is cheap," he said. "But good whiskey does cost money."

True, Mullen would wind up drinking most of the whiskey. But Abbot believed that Creel would object no more than he would.

The skipper could put on his public performance, but so long as he recognized privately their worth, nobody cared about his yakking. And both would be there to carry him over the rough spots.

"He is a very decent man," Creel said. He put the bottle of Scotch back into the case and shoved both cases into hiding from the office people. "He is a very hard man not to like."

—BY VICTOR H. JOHNSON



The people move in

By Arthur D. Morse

Never in U. S. history have so many taken such an active part in their schools—and the results, in brick and frame, can be seen in every town.

TWO YEARS AGO Sam Milbourne, a chunky industrial engineer who looks like a younger Jean Hersholt, had a heart attack, and the citizens of Fair Lawn, New Jersey, voted against building a new elementary and junior high-school.

At the time there was no relation between the two events; Milbourne was a pretty average suburbanite who worked hard at his job with Bendix Aviation Corp., cut his lawn on Saturdays, raised his two kids, complained about his bills and taxes, and left the running of the schools and his town to the politicians—"that's their job." His heart attack—not serious—was the result of the stresses that are usual for an upper middle-class family man today; he was in

the hospital three weeks, then resting at home for three more.

He was still convalescing when the people voted against the schools—despite the fact that the High School, built for 650 kids, bulged with 1500, and elementary schools were no better off. That shocked him—and a number of other Fair Lawn parents—and pitched them into a two-year battle in which they became politicians-by-necessity, spent hundreds of late nights, lunch hours and weekends organizing, ringing doorbells, gathering facts, writing pamphlets, making speeches, and getting furious at the opposition's attacks, then calming down and planning how best to answer them.

One woman went from door to door pushing

her baby in a carriage and pulling her slightly older child by the hand. Talking schools. Another couple, whose only child was four years too young for kindergarten, took turns babysitting and going out nights—to talk schools to their neighbors. Some of the talkers had doors slammed in their faces; others were ordered off the property. Sam Milbourne, among other duties, wrote a weekly column for a local paper for six months. The struggle was “the best therapy there is for a bum ticker,” he said.

It also did wonders for the community. Last September Fair Lawn's new junior-high and elementary schools opened, but the Citizens School Committee, now grown to 350 members, had only begun its job. Already the town needs another junior high—and, thanks to the Committee, voted \$1,525,000 for it last June. Also approved were another new elementary school and an addition to an existing building.

Fair Lawn's experience is typical of what's been going on all over the nation in the past five years. In a movement unprecedented in U.S. history—with the possible exception of the



Committee leaders look over school plans. L. to r.: Mrs. K. Weintz, Sam Milbourne, George Richardson, George Brockway, Mrs. O. Schmidt.

on the schools

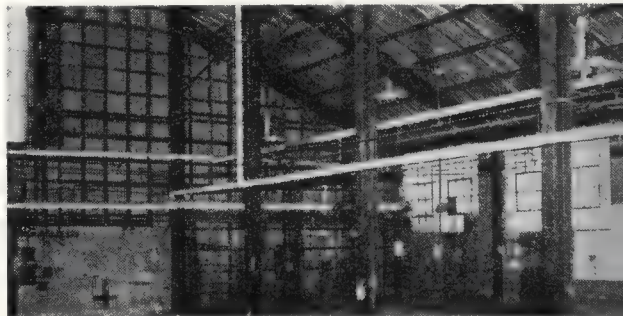
Lyceum movement from 1824 to 1832—the citizens have been moving in on their schools. In 1949 when the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools was formed, there were about a dozen local citizens groups in the country; today there are more than 9,000 and new ones are forming at the rate of 200 a month. In the same period the membership of Parent-Teacher Associations has increased approximately 55 per cent, and the bulk of new members are men.

The primary job that these citizen groups faced was to get more classrooms for their kids. But that's all they've done; generally, the pattern runs like this: First, they get new schools, then, their interest aroused, they go on to look into the intangibles, like educational methods, the efficiency of school operations, teachers' salaries, methods of financing, and what to do about the teacher shortage. (We now need 100,000 yet, increasingly, young people are staying away from the career.)

Always, of course, there has been opposition, and many groups have failed even to get needed new buildings. Henry Toy, Jr., director of the National Citizens Commission, says the opposition falls into definite categories of people who are found over and over again in different towns. There are the apathetic—people who don't know



Exterior and interior views of factory some wished rebuilt as school.





Fair Lawn citizens gather proudly to break ground for a new grade school.

and don't care; the older people who own property and whose children have grown up; some of the real-estate brokers (though increasingly realtors are realizing that good schools are a good selling point); people who are hard pressed by taxes—"school taxes are about the only ones you can vote against;" the neurotic mamas whose over-protected children get in trouble and it's always the school's fault; the "old" residents who resent the "new" (most school overcrowding is in suburbs, which have been growing tremendously since the war); the "nationalists" who are over-frightened by Communism and see the Soviet specter behind everything that's been improved, or changed, since they went to school; the entrenched machine politicians. Many of these types were found in Fair Lawn—which is why its story is, in essence, the story of the whole, nation-wide movement.

The population of Fair Lawn mushroomed from 5000 in 1930 to about 30,000 in 1951. New-comers agreed that it was a lovely place without extremes of poverty and wealth and that in spite of almost unrestricted development it had managed to retain some country charm. Few were concerned about the swamping of the schools, for it was obvious that someone else would take action soon. Then on Oct. 4, 1951, a scant one-third of eligible voters turned down a bond issue for a new junior-high and an elementary school.

The parents were shocked awake, and when a PTA leader, Mrs. Jerry Schmidt, sought members for a new school committee, an avalanche of

volunteers responded. One of them was Sam Milbourne.

The avalanche attended the next school-board meeting and urged a new election. But the School Board was discouraged by the setback at the polls, and members said they would call for a new referendum only if 3000 eligible voters signed petitions requesting it.

This was a tall order. On the previous election day a total of only 3200 ballots had been cast and certainly the "againsts" would not sign the school petitions. But the Citizens School Committee accepted the challenge and the battle began.

Sam Milbourne was suddenly publicity chairman for the committee, and he became a relentless gatherer of facts.

"I found," he says, "that the schools were getting five dollars worth of value for every dollar they spent, and I discovered that Dr. Grover, our superintendent, was working 16 hours a day. Our school board, which had been popularly elected, included some of our ablest citizens. They served without pay, met constantly, and studied every possible economy and service. For the first time I really knew that we had a wonderful school system. If my kids and all the other kids could not get the education they deserved in overcrowded, double sessions, it would be the fault of people like me, not the teachers, the school board, or the superintendent."

The Opponents Rally

But there were other voices in Fair Lawn.

John Karl, aged, president of the Taxpayer's Association, who opposed the new schools on the basis of economy, had announced after the election: "My flag is raised to the top of the pole in celebration of the people's victory over the school board." He was determined to consolidate this victory and, as the Citizens School Committee organized to amass 3000 signatures, he assembled his own heavy artillery.

Another key figure in the opposition forces was Mrs. Herbert Wardle, who had organized her own citizens committee (it held no open, scheduled meetings and its membership was never announced). Mrs. Wardle opposed new school construction on the basis that it was wasteful.

Among other activities, she had played a leading role in a last-minute maneuver that influenced the first election. Teaming up with the borough council, the local governing body with close ties to the Bergen County Republican machine, she backed an astonishing substitute for the new junior high-school. It called for the conversion of a 20-year-old paint factory for temporary school use. This would have cost over \$600,000 and would not have provided a single permanent classroom, since at the end of a few years the building would have become Fair Lawn's borough hall.

A Damned Site

The paint factory was located in a hazardous area between the Erie Railroad tracks and one of the busiest streets in town. This site had been turned down previously by the school board, and later it would be rejected by the New Jersey Department of Education. But nonetheless it seemed to some as an economical compromise between no construction and an expensive new building. It accounted for many "no" votes.

Sharing the general views of Mr. Karl and Mrs. Wardle were civic associations representing home-owners in two developments. These individuals and groups were sincere in their beliefs that the schools were extravagant, but they offered no workable alternatives to relieve the critical overcrowding. Nevertheless they held a trump card. Local taxes had recently doubled. Now the new schools would be an added burden. With high taxes and high prices harassing the residents, there was strong reason for citizens to vote against the only tax that they had power to reject.

To obtain the necessary 3000 signatures the Citizens School Committee set up an elaborate organization. George Richardson, partner in a New York Stock Exchange firm, was appointed campaign manager. Richardson, a Republican without ties to the local machine, found himself teamed up with George Brockway, vice-president of a New York publishing firm and one of the few outspoken Democrats in town. They had been prominent in a successful campaign some years earlier to substitute the council-manager form of government for Fair Lawn's politics-ridden system. With Richardson and Brockway building the grass-roots organization and Sam Milbourne bombarding the town with publicity, the Committee shifted into high gear.

A leader was appointed in each of the town's eight election districts. Each district was then divided into sections under section leaders and further into individual blocks under block leaders. Lists of eligible voters were distributed and door-to-door canvassing began.

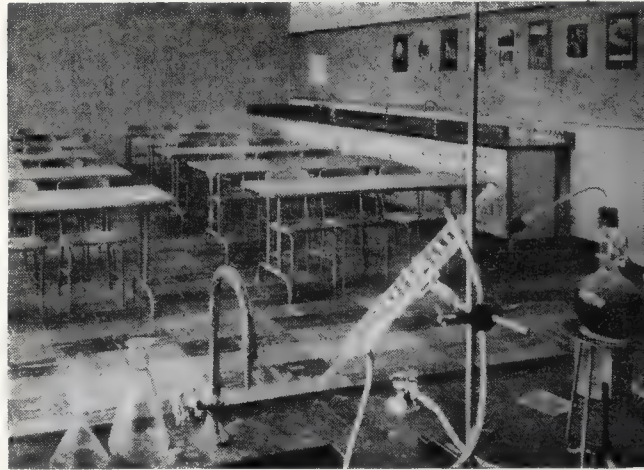
During the first week, block leaders turned in petitions with 1500 signatures.

Every night panels of Committee experts met with district leaders and briefed them on school facts. When a district leader reported widespread misunderstanding about the cost of education, Sam Milbourne pointed out that Fair Lawn's annual expenditure per pupil was below the state average of \$275 and ranked 43rd among the 70 school systems in Bergen County. When other questions were raised about school architecture, teachers' salaries or courses of instruction, the block leaders were prepared to answer them.

By the end of the second week of canvassing over 4000 signatures had been obtained, more than the total vote in the October 4 election.

Some block leaders wheeled their baby carriages from door to door during the day while the men went out at night—selling good schools. For most it was their first attempt at canvassing.

As the signatures poured in, the opposition began stirring and the rumors began to fly. It was said that a curriculum coordinator, who "could serve no possible useful purpose," had



Latest equipment, as in this lab, is used in Fair Lawn's new junior high.

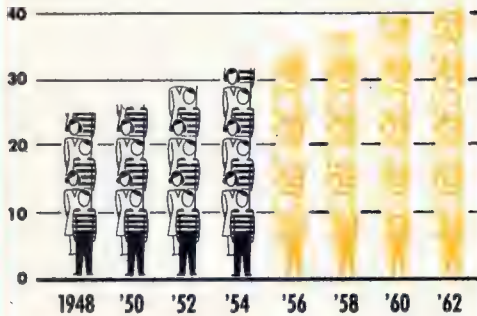
been hired by the superintendent at an enormous salary. As if this were not enough, the coordinator had appropriated precious classroom space for her private office. The hiring of the coordinator was "just another proof that the schools were deserting the 3 R's for frill courses."

The issue of Communism suddenly was thrust into the controversy. Questions about the integrity of the school board were raised and spread.

Milbourne exploded the myth about the curriculum coordinator's private office and pointed out that her work with teachers led to more ef-

Student Enrollments Have Swollen Like This

millions
of students



fective learning by youngsters, better understanding of the 3 R's, and smoother transition to upper grades.

As for the tireless school board, struggling to cram more and more children into inelastic school buildings, Sam Milbourne wrote, "Its members rate orchids, not scallions; ballots, not bullets."

On November 13, 1951, three weeks after the campaign began, the Citizens School Committee presented petitions with 5,914 signatures to the Board of Education.

That same day John Karl of the Taxpayer's Association, Mrs. Wardle and others opposed to the new referendum, appeared before the borough council.

Mr. Karl said that he had been a New Jersey voter for more than 60 years and that a new referendum would open the gates to Communism. He likened the petitions to a rebellion against the fundamental principles of government for which men were fighting in Korea. Mrs. Wardle demanded that the signatures be investigated.

Rough Language

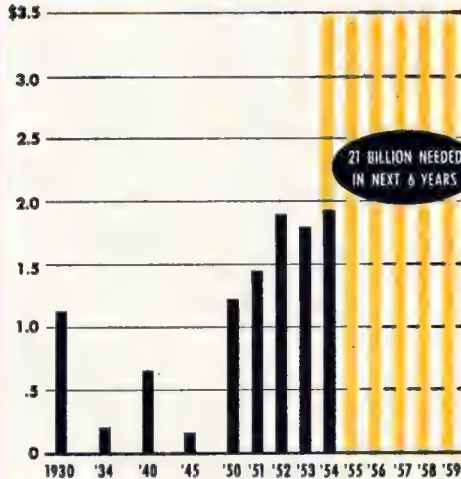
A newspaper battle between the opposing forces developed.

Responding to Mr. Karl's charges, Sam Milbourne wrote:

"Any American with the foggiest notion of our heritage of rights and privileges knows that 'the right of the people peacefully to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances' is a part of our Bill of Rights which includes the first 10 amendments to the Constitution."

Spending for Public Schools Hasn't Kept Pace

annual outlay
in billions



The head of the Taxpayer's Association fired back with both barrels:

"What evidence is there that this petition is not a Communisticly [sic] inspired trial balloon to show how easily they can overthrow a local election? . . . How much wider can we open the door to Communism than to invite them in to help overthrow our form of government? Why should the legal voters be bound by the registry list, and a Red Russian be permitted to come directly from the boat or plane to Fair Lawn and sign a petition to overthrow a legal vote?"

To the *Bergen Evening Record* Milbourne explained the only motivation of the Citizens School Committee.

"We are, all of us, just plain people. We have never aspired to public office; we have no record of public speaking behind us; we have never written letters to the editor heretofore. We minded our own little private business, and expected someone else to see to the future of our children's education. We were wrong. We realized it. We did something about it."

As the fight got hotter and more side issues were introduced the near-by *Paterson Evening News* editorialized about the turmoil:

"In the process of stimulating the new agitation for the junior high . . . a spirit which does

not belong in an American community has been engendered. Neighbors aren't speaking to each other if they have divergent views on the school situation. People are calling each other names if they disagree on the issue. Such harsh epithets as 'subversive,' 'un-American' and the like are being hurled."

In spite of the epithets the school board had been given twice as many signatures as it had required. A new bond election was scheduled for January 15. It was decided to vote only on the question of a new junior high-school. The fight for the elementary school which had also been voted down on October 4 would be postponed.

Climax of the Battle

Although no one had as yet suggested an alternative to the junior high, intensity of feeling continued to mount as January 15 approached. The opposition directed special appeals to older people without school-children and to parents whose children attended either private or parochial schools. But not all such appeals worked; in many cases these people were among the most vigorous supporters of new public schools.

The Citizens School Committee was kept busy answering a barrage of new charges. Home-owners were told that only the apartment-dwellers were in favor of new schools because they paid no taxes. They were warned that they would lose their homes because of exorbitant taxes resulting from the school-building program.

Sam Milbourne's faithful typewriter then pounded out the news that the new schools would cost the average home-owner \$1.95 extra in 1952, \$6.87 in 1953, \$9.51 in 1954 and from then on successively lower amounts. Nevertheless the day before the election the Ferry Heights Civic Association placed large advertisements in the newspapers servicing Fair Lawn. They read as follows:

"We are prepared to pay the taxes necessary to assure our children the finest education possible. But we are NOT prepared to jeopardize our homes in order to satisfy the whims of those whose ideas are beyond the average taxpayer's pocketbook."

Mrs. Wardle, Mr. Karl and the Brookdale Civic Association fired closing salvos of the same type—and then it was Election Day.

The Citizens School Committee got out the vote on a block-by-block basis. Days before, block leaders had telephoned and visited voters reminding them of the date, hours and location of polling places. On Election Day they telephoned again and checked off the names of those who had gone to vote. In addition they provided baby-sitters and transportation to the polls.

Several Fair Lawners displayed fierce determination to cast their ballots. One woman, in the last stages of pregnancy, just made it to the polls. Another postponed an operation for several hours so she could vote.

Fifty-one per cent of the eligible voters participated compared with the 34% who had voted in October. When the more than 5000 ballots had been counted, the Citizens School Committee had won by a bare 198 votes. The junior high-school was a reality.

It was a narrow squeak but it broke the back of the opposition. Since then the Committee has elected the eight candidates it has backed for the Board of Education. The elementary school voted down in the October election was later restored by a 71-margin and built for twice its original student capacity.

On October 18, 1953, Sam Milbourne, now Chairman of the Lay Committees working with the School Board, received a priceless reward for his services. He was an honored guest at the dedication of the magnificent Thomas Jefferson Junior High School for which he and his friends had labored.

The Committee has rolled right on. Last February, there was no opposition to its three candidates for the School Board and the increased budget they supported. Last June, their new schools were approved.

Said Sam Milbourne: "Not four people who are now involved in the Committee had ever been active in town affairs before." And there's been an unexpected dividend: Once the people got interested in schools they also get interested in town government. Many who started on the Committee went on to form a Non-Partisan League which so far has elected four new faces to the seven-man town Council—and thrown out four of the entrenched political machine's "boys."

No question about it. The people, in Fair Lawn as elsewhere, are moving in on the schools.

—BY ARTHUR D. MORSE

A chance to see, touch and feed a live lamb—instead of merely reading about one—typifies the modern education that Fair Lawn kids now get.



FRETTING BULL

By R. G. BERRY

Hodge had a lovelorn bull and a lovelorn granddaughter on his hands, and both looked like staying there a spell.

But it's remarkable what a girl can do if she's a very bad cook.



HODGE POLK, my grandfather, leaned his pot belly against the stout wire fence. He gazed across the barnyard, pretending Jim Bump wasn't standing there beside him. His eyes, sharp and blue as the spring sky, were on the bull.

I knew how angry my grandfather was; I could tell by the way his shaggy mustache moved with his tobacco chewing.

In the far corner the bull stood, his great head lowered, sharp horns shining. The bright copper ring in his nose grazed the muck he stood in. Except for his muddy underside, the bull was pure white, the pink of his hide showing through. We called him Pink. Sometimes I thought the name annoyed him, much as Hodge was annoyed when I called him "Grampa."

Pink watched the three of us, the whites of

Illustration by ROBERT GREENHALCH



his eyes showing. He pawed the muck and snorted. He switched his tail and shook his head irritably.

Long-legged Jim Bump looked at Pink in a way that showed how much he wanted the bull. "Shame to keep a bull mired in the barnyard," he said.

Hodge's mustache quickened with his chewing.

"Getting scrawny," said Jim Bump. "Ain't fed proper."

Hodge wouldn't look at him.

"Bull gets ugly, penned up," Jim Bump continued. "Wants to run with the herd."

"Don't tell me about bulls," Hodge growled. "A little pinin' does a bull good."

But Pink should have been out to pasture and Hodge knew it. He was getting too old to

tend a dairy herd; and he had money coming in from his timber. He had sold his herd the year before and much of his land, and now must dispose of the bull. He knew Jim Bump, with his own big herd, needed a bull. And Jim Bump was a man who could afford a fair price.

Jim Bump squinted hard at Pink. "That's a mean, ugly bull, neighbor. Man your age has got no license trying to handle an ugly bull."

"That animal is gentle as a kitten," Hodge's eyes were frosty. "I'm putting him to pasture when the time comes." He glanced up at the sun, as if the time would come any minute.

Jim Bump knew, of course, that what little pasture Hodge had kept was barely enough for his two milk cows.

We stood silent at the fence, Hodge chewing, Jim Bump hungrily eying the bull. Every morning for a month now Jim Bump had come ambling down from the main road, stepping his boots high in the spring mud. He would settle his long, jowly face over a fence post and gaze at the bull. But he never said he wanted to buy the bull, and Hodge never admitted he had to sell.

It was a waiting game. Jim Bump's cows were going dry, one by one. His north pasture adjoined Hodge's land not far from the barn, and he kept young stock there, big overgrown Holstein heifers. They came every day and stood along the fence, lowing to the bull. Jim Bump would hurry from his house to chase his heifers down to the other end of his pasture.

EVERY day the bull, alone in the barnyard, grew testier. He stood pawing holes in the muck, shaking his head like a dog with fleas, switching his tail. Sometimes, when the heifers stood lowing, he would charge the fence, and bellow angrily when it refused to give. Jim Bump knew it worried Hodge to see the bull penned up. He knew Hodge had to get rid of Pink before long.

As we stood there by the barnyard fence, the kitchen door opened, and Jim Bump glanced quickly up toward the big house. He saw my sister Lucia on the stoop, and showed his big teeth in a smile. "Mornin', Miss Lucia!"

Lucia smiled her good morning. She knew Jim Bump annoyed Hodge, and that was why she smiled so nicely. Her hair was piled high and shining in the sun. She was wearing a fresh apron and had a narrow red ribbon twined in her hair. Lucia piled her hair high, I knew, to make her seem taller.

"You'll be losing your little cook soon, I suspect," Jim Bump said, eying Hodge sideways. "She couldn't find a better boy than Red Pollard."

Hodge blew out his mustache explosively, a

way he had of cooling his temper. "Oh, pshaw, Jim Bump!" he snorted.

Jim Bump's face twitched. I knew he must have heard about Hodge's trouble with Red Pollard. "Why, neighbor—don't you approve of the match?" he inquired, pretending surprise.

On the stoop Lucia stood, head thrown back, gazing up the road, acting sad. We had been at Hodge's about two months—our folks had moved to the city but hadn't found a house yet. Lucia hadn't wanted to come here, and she had been acting ever since we arrived. She was 18, four years older than I was, and worried about turning into an old maid.

At first she'd worried for fear there wouldn't be any boy friends. Six had showed up the first week. Lucia weeded out all but Joe Grubb and Red Pollard. But then Joe Grubb, who was the

make it easy

A WIRE coat hanger rustproofed with tape or two coats of spar varnish can be shaped into sock driers for home and service use.

—Helen Mull, Ecorse, Mich.

R.F.D. man, stopped coming, and Hodge had the trouble with Red Pollard and booted him off the premises. So now Lucia acted sad all the time, trying to make people sorry for her.

I wondered sometimes why Joe Grubb had stopped coming. Maybe Lucia didn't ask him; she'd got pretty huffy over the pancakes, the last time Joe called.

Maybe Joe stayed away *because* of the pancakes. Hodge always praised them, and I did too, not to make a liar of Hodge. But when Lucia asked Joe Grubb that night if he wanted a second helping, Joe didn't seem to hear her. And he never came again.

Lucia was a pretty fair cook; but she didn't eat pancakes, and maybe that was why she didn't know how bad they were. But sometimes I wondered if she didn't make them bad on purpose. It was just an idea I had; I didn't know why she'd do such a thing.

Jim Bump had surely heard of Hodge's booting Red Pollard; but he stood at the barnyard fence now pretending he hadn't. "Why, neighbor," he said to Hodge, "I s'posed you'd be proud to own Red Pollard as a grandson."

I saw the flush come to Hodge's cheekbones and spread to the bridge of his hook nose. Jim Bump knew Hodge had no use for the Pollards; a Pollard had cheated him once in a lumber deal.

Hodge turned abruptly. His mustache was bristling. The frost was in his blue eyes. His old man's voice was harsh when he spoke. "Jim Bump," he said, "you have been coming every morning for a month, standing by my barnyard, talking bull." Hodge yanked open the heavy gate-latch. "Your cows are drying up and your heifers are getting big as horses! You need a bull, and I've got one to sell. *How much'll you pay?*"

Jim Bump was startled; he began to hitch his shoulders and dart his eyes this way and that. The waiting game was over, but he didn't like the way it had ended. "Why, neighbor Polk," he protested, "I never had no intention of buying your bull!"

"Never had no intention of buying my bull!" Hodge pointed a heavy forefinger at Jim Bump's twitching nose. "Don't you step foot on these premises again till you're prepared to pay a fair price for that animal!"

Hodge spat halfway across the main road and started limping toward the house, favoring his right leg, crippled long ago in a lumbering accident. He marched straight to the stoop and into the kitchen, never looking back.

Jim Bump got into his truck and drove fast down the road, empty milk-cans clattering in the back.

In the house I found Hodge angrily pacing the sitting room. "Came to my barnyard and stood talking bull! Never had any intention of buying the animal!"

Lucia, smiling in her sad way, called us to dinner. She had been specially nice to Hodge ever since he booted Red Pollard off the premises. She'd been acting this way, I knew, to make Hodge feel guilty. All during dinner she smiled at Hodge and asked him if he wanted things.

But her acting didn't touch Hodge now; he was thinking about Jim Bump's trying to take him in. He would stop chewing and glare in the direction of Bump's house, mustache bristling.

"It's too bad you got mad at Mr. Bump," Lucia remarked. "I thought it was nice of him

to offer the use of his pasture for poor Pink. He wasn't even going to charge for the feed!"

She surprised Hodge into snapping, "Oh, pshaw, girl!"

Lucia raised her brows.

I said, "Jim Bump tried to cheat Hodge out of Pink, Lucia."

"That's silly," she scoffed. "How could he?"

Hodge was about to explode, when Pink roared out in the barnyard. It wasn't one of those coughing bellows; it was a roar. Hodge stiffened in his chair. We hear the crash of Pink charging the fence; the posts creaked and the wires sang.

HODGE and I went out on the stoop. We could see Jim Bump's big heifers, excited now, running along the fence, their ears pricked toward the barnyard. They were bawling for the bull.

Pink roared and hit the fence again, and Hodge's eyes were worried. "Those heifers are fretting the bull," he said, shaking his head. "That's a stout fence, but it won't stand long against that kind of bunting."

Jim Bump didn't come out to chase his heifers away; and I wondered if he was leaving them there purposely to pester Pink.

Hodge turned abruptly and walked into the house. "I won't have Jim Bump and his heifers causing me trouble," he declared. He went directly to the phone. "What's Joe Grubb's number?"

Lucia's smile disappeared. "What do you want of Joe Grubb?"

Hodge was brisk. "Joe Grubb drives over his mail route every day. If there's a farmer needs a bull, Joe'll know about it. I'll leave word for him to come over to supper tonight."

Lucia said coldly, "You can't ask Joe Grubb to supper, Grampa. He'll think you're asking him to see me, now you've driven Alfred away."

"Oh, pshaw, girl!" Hodge snapped. "Joe's no such fool!"

I stared at Lucia: she was crying. "Some-

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times I wish they'd sent me to an orphan asylum!" she sobbed, and ran upstairs.

Hodge turned to me in dismay. "Man don't know which way to turn! Damned if women ain't changed since I was younger!"

We sat down to finish dinner, and heard the bull let out another roar. We heard him charge into the fence; we heard the heifers bawling. Hodge jumped up and put on his hat. "We'll see!" he said angrily. "We'll see, Jim Bump!" He stamped out.

I was eating my pie when Lucia came downstairs. "Poor Grampa," she said, gazing out the window. "I hate to see him so worried." Then she asked, "Did he phone Joe Grubb?"

"Not after you brought up the trouble with Red Pollard."

Lucia tossed her head. "It's not my fault if Grampa's embarrassed about the way he treated Alfred!"

Lucia didn't know I'd seen the whole thing. The trouble was over an old hen. Red Pollard and Lucia were sitting in the swing, and the hen came pecking around. I was watching from the woodshed. "Want to see something funny?" Red Pollard grinned at Lucia.

He caught the hen by the legs and swung her three or four times around his head. Lucia made him stop; but he was laughing himself silly to see the old hen stagger around the yard, when Hodge happened to come up from the barn. That's when Mr. Red Pollard left the premises on the toe of Hodge's boot.

He deserved what he'd got, and I was about to tell Lucia so, when we heard the pounding outside. We saw Hodge nailing a wide pine board to the apple tree by the front gate. He stepped back to look at it, seeming pleased. Lucia, peering, said, "Why, it looks like a sign."

It was a sign. On the board in big black letters Hodge had painted: GENTEL BULL FOR SALE 400\$. And below that, as if it had been an afterthought: To ENYBODY BUT JIM BUMP.

HODGE was beaming when he came inside. "We'll see, Jim Bump!" he said. He was acting more like his old self. It had done him good to make a start toward getting rid of Pink. He smiled at my sister. "Lucia, guess you think I'm turning into an old crank."

"Why, no, Grampa," Lucia said, putting on her sad smile.

"Maybe I've been acting ornery lately," Hodge said awkwardly. "Say, why don't you invite young Pollard down to supper some evening? We'll just forget that fuss over the hen."

Lucia's sad smile wouldn't work now; but she put on a tragic expression. "No, Grampa,



Alfred wouldn't ever come. Not after what happened."

Hodge's face fell. But then, changing the subject, he made another try at appeasing Lucia. "Why don't we have some more of those good pancakes tonight?" he said hopefully.

It worked all right; Lucia was smiling again. But I didn't quite like that smile of my sister's; and I got a heavy feeling in my stomach. I was thinking it was about time Lucia was told how bad those pancakes were—even if she already knew.

In the afternoon Hodge and I went down to plant beans. Hodge was cheerful. "People will see that sign, and the news will get around," he said. "Shouldn't be surprised if I'd sold a bull by night."

He looked up eagerly every time a car went by. The trouble was, it was Jim Bump half the time. Jim kept driving slowly by, looking at the sign and peering down toward the barnyard.

"Go on about your business, Jim Bump," Hodge growled. "You've lost your chance at my bull."

The big heifers annoyed Hodge too. They stood along the fence with their ears pricked toward the barnyard, lowing at the bull. And Pink kept bellowing and charging the stout fence. Hodge winced every time he heard the posts creak. Finally, after a couple of hours of it, he threw down his hoe. "By Godfrey, I wish

I'd turned that bull in with those heifers when I had the chance," he declared. "I'd sooner let Jim Bump cheat me than stand this fretting!"

Hodge glanced toward the road as he spoke, and his face changed. There near the house we could see the back of a parked truck; and then we caught a glimpse of a lanky figure disappearing behind the barn. "Whoever that farmer is, he's bought himself a bull," Hodge said to me. "If he won't buy, I'll pay him to take the animal!"

As we started for the barnyard, Jim Bump came from his house, stepping his boots high across the pasture, and began chasing his big heifers away from the fence. "I hope you sell your bull soon, neighbor," he called over. "I'm pretty tired of that animal fretting my young heifers. It keeps them from feeding, and they ain't getting their proper growth."

"I'll soon be rid of him," Hodge snapped. "And you can go elsewhere to get your heifers bred, Jim Bump!"

Hodge and I hurried to the barnyard. We rounded the corner of the barn, and stopped in our tracks. There at the fence, like a tall, stooped rooster, stood Red Pollard, grinning that sidelong Pollard grin. "Don't stand there making faces at me, old Hodge Polk," he snickered. "I've come to buy your bull."

Hodge barked, "What with, Red Pollard? Big talk?"

"I've got the price," said Red Pollard with a superior smirk. He fished a fat wallet from his pocket and slapped it against his pants leg. "I'm going dairying, and I'll need a bull."

Hodge's mustache was bristling. "Don't know as I'll sell you that bull," he declared. "Don't care to do business with a Pollard!"

The kitchen door opened then, and Lucia came out on the stoop. Her hair was piled higher than ever; it shone in the sun. She was wearing her blue best dress and smiling down at Red Pollard. She had a blue ribbon twined in her hair.

Red Pollard grinned. "Better make up your mind, old Hodge, before I change mine. That bull don't look any too healthy to me. I like a bull with a little spirit to him!"

Hodge took a quick look at Pink, and saw a weary animal. The bull had been bunting the fence all day; he was tired out. Now the heifers had gone away, he had quieted down. He just stood, head lowered, studying Red Pollard.

Lucia called down, "Grampa, it would be a nice start for Alfred, if he could buy Pink. Then he'd be ready to begin dairying, as soon as he bought a farm and some cows."

Hodge's jaw set stubbornly. "By Godfrey, I don't know," he said to Red Pollard. "I agreed

not to interfere with you courting Lucia, but this is a different matter!"

Red Pollard snickered. "You've got to get rid of that bull, old Hodge. You may not get another chance!"

Hodge took a long look at Pink. He glanced over where Jim Bump stood watching from the line fence, and then made up his mind. "All right," he said grudgingly. "I never dealt with a Pollard yet without I got cheated, but I'll take one more chance!"

Hodge stepped into the barn, and came out with a light chain. "Back your truck down here," he ordered Red Pollard. "I'll snap this chain into the ring in the bull's nose. You can hitch him to the back of your truck and lead him home."

"Grampa, you be careful with that bull," Lucia called down worriedly. "Can't Alfred help chain him?"

Red Pollard was a show-off. "Heck, I'll chain the critter single-handed," he smirked. He grabbed the chain from Hodge's hand and started to open the barnyard gate.

"Now, hold on!" Hodge said irritably. "I don't know if you can handle that animal. He's gentle, but he's been fretting."

"Alfred, that bull is ugly," Lucia called. "You be careful!"

"The bull's the one better be careful!" Red Pollard crowed. He yanked open the gate, showing off for Lucia, and strode into the barnyard. "Wake up, you old cuss!" he hollered to Pink.

make it easy

IF you don't have a good fire extinguisher in your automobile, carry a box of ordinary salt. It works very well in snuffing out automotive fires. It is also mighty useful around the kitchen when cooking grease becomes ignited.

—L. E. Jones, Bellevue, Wash.

"Take care!" Hodge cried, alarmed. "Walk up to that bull slow!"

And Pink, showing interest, started pawing the muck and switching his tail. He lowered his head till the copper ring in his nose touched the ground. Watching Red Pollard, he let out a couple of practice snorts.

Red Pollard's grin was strained. He was out of Lucia's sight, the barn cutting off her view, and he paused to reconsider. Pink shook his head and snorted again.

"Don't you sniff and snort at me!" Red

Pollard hollered. "I'll put this chain on your nose and snap the ears off'n you!"

That was all Pink needed. His tail flew up, and he let out a bellow. His hoofs dug in, and he charged. He was on top of Red Pollard in two jumps, and if his hoofs hadn't slipped he'd have gored Pollard clean through before he could have moved.

"Run, you poor fool!" Hodge yelled.

Red Pollard dropped the chain and flew. He went across the barnyard like a scared rooster, and sailed over the fence without touching wire. Pink, a foot-and-a-half behind, crashed full force into the fence. The posts creaked and gave; the wires sang and went dead.

"Dog nab a big-mouth Pollard!" Hodge cried hoarsely.

Then we saw Red Pollard on the other side of the fence, eyes popping and mouth twisted, with a hay fork in his hands. "I'll take the goldarn ugliness out of you!" he screeched, and drove the fork across the fence, straight for Pink. The sharp tines sank deep in the bull's shoulder, and he let out an agonized roar. His hoofs dug, and he plunged into the sagging fence, heading for Red Pollard.

"You sneakin' coward!" Hodge shouted. "You did that out of pure Pollard meanness!"

With Pink thrashing and bellowing, tangled in the fallen fence, Red Pollard took to his heels. And the next thing I knew, Hodge was in the barnyard, running in his limping stride toward the bull. "Hey, bull!" he roared. "Hey, you bull!"

"Grampa," I called, scared, "come back out of the barnyard!"

Hodge stooped and picked up the chain and, still moving toward the bull, let it drag out till the hook was in his hand. "Close that gate!" he called to me. "I can't let this animal bust out of the barnyard!"

I didn't want to close the gate on Hodge. I hesitated, watching as he drew nearer the bull, walking slowly now.

"Quiet down," he was saying. "Quiet down, you bull."

Pink shook his head angrily and lunged

clear of the fence. He came on, wildly hooking, wanting to knife those horns into Hodge. "Hey!" Hodge yelled fiercely; then, as the bull got close, he did a fancy sidestep on his one good leg. More quickly than I'd thought he could move, Hodge got past the horns and stood at the bull's shoulder. He swung downward with the hook, trying to snap it into the copper ring in Pink's nose. Pink wheeled, horns swinging, and Hodge, off balance, grabbed him by the ridge of the backbone and hung on.

"Don't get ornery, you bull!" Hodge roared, trying again with the chain hook.

I stood watching, holding my breath. The bull's bellow was sharp, his horns slashed widely. Hodge, his face twisted with his effort, hung to the long hair along the bull's backbone. Pink shook himself and lurched sidewise, and Hodge was down in the muck. I found myself running through the barnyard, waving my arms and yelling at the bull.

HODGE rolled away from the horns and scrambled to his feet. "Go back, boy!" he shouted to me. He still had the chain in his hand. As Pink lurched forward, Hodge, facing him, made another desperate pass with the hook. He missed, and Pink's head thudded into his middle. Hodge grunted and went down, a horn on either side of him.

"Damned bull!" he roared and, sitting in the muck, lashed out angrily with the chain, striking Pink in the face. Pink stood, confused, Hodge got to his feet and backed to the fallen fence. I was ploughing through the barnyard, still waving my arms and yelling, and Pink saw me and wheeled toward me.

"Run, boy!" Hodge yelled. "Get out of the barnyard!"

I turned and ran. I knew without looking back that Pink was after me. I ran as fast as I could in the muck, through the barnyard and out the gate. I heard Pink's snorting, heard his sharp bellow; I heard his shoulder strike the gate as he plunged out, and I kept on running. I heard his hoofs behind me and Hodge's yelling

—make it easy

WHEN it is necessary to plane or sandpaper sticking doors and windows, tight-fitting sections can be marked easily with the aid of a piece of carbon paper. Lay the paper—carbon side out—against the frame where the fit appears snug and press the door or window against it. The area to be removed will show up smudged.

—Richard E. Maples, Los Angeles, Calif.

Help the other fellow by passing along tricks and gadgets you've dreamed up for making work around the house easier. Bluebook will pay \$5 for each "Make It Easy" published, but none can be acknowledged or returned.

from the barnyard. I ran up the path to the iron fence around the house and threw myself under it, and crawled to safety in the deep grass of the yard.

I was on my feet then, gasping but ready to run some more, and saw the bull wheeling in the roadway, and Hodge lashing at him with the chain. "Get out of there, boy!" he yelled. Over the fence I went, and saw Hodge drive the bull through the gate into the yard, and slam the gate shut on him.

I was beside Hodge, shaking all over. Pink, penned within the iron fence, stood stock still, breathing hard, and then let out a roar and charged the fence. It held firm, and he shook his head angrily. Blood streamed from his wounded shoulder and down his left foreleg.

"Poor damned ignorant bull!" I looked at Hodge and saw the fierce light in his eyes, his mustache bristling. He was panting, but he wiped sweat from his forehead with a steady hand. "Finally got the cuss to green grass!" He looked down at me and laughed grimly. "Got rid of Red Pollard too!"

We walked around to the woodshed; it was the only way to get into the house, with Pink commanding the front yard. We went into the kitchen, and I smelled pancakes frying. I almost turned and walked out. Somebody, sometime, had to tell Lucia how bad those pancakes were. I didn't know who'd do the telling.

LUCIA, seeming doubtful, smiled her best smile at Hodge. "Grampa," she said, "we're having company for supper."

Hodge and I both turned to look at the table.

"Me," Red Pollard smirked. He sat there with a knife in one hand, fork in the other, a napkin tied round his neck.

Hodge stood before the table, stiff with anger, mustache bristling. Lucia pulled nervously at his sleeve. "You wash up, Grampa, and I'll serve the pancakes."

"Yes, wash up and set down, old Hodge," Red Pollard grinned. "We'll talk bull!"

"We won't talk bull!" Hodge roared. "I'll leave you be, Red Pollard, but I hate to set at the supper table with a man that'd take a fork to a harmless bull!"

Lucia protested, "Alfred did it in self-defense, Grampa."

"It was pure Pollard meanness!"

Red Pollard snickered. "That bull attacked me. I showed him he was bellerin' at the wrong man!"

Hodge turned abruptly and went to the sink. He pumped a basin full of cold water and thrust his face into it. As he splashed and spluttered there, I glanced at Lucia and saw she

still had the doubtful look. And suddenly I knew why.

I was somehow sure Lucia made her pancakes bad purposely to punish Hodge for interfering in her affairs. And, he didn't know it yet, but Red Pollard's affection for Lucia was going to be tested.

I took my place beside Hodge, and Lucia set a platter of pancakes before Red Pollard. "Now try these, Alfred," she said nervously. "See if I'm a good enough cook for a Pollard!"

Hodge blew out his mustache at that. But he was watching as closely as Lucia when Red Pollard, grinning, forked half a dozen big pancakes onto his plate. He knifed off a quarter pound of butter and put it on top. With the butter melting, he poured half a pitcher of hot brown-sugar syrup over the pancakes. "Here goes!" he said. He cut the pile into exact quarters and forked the nearest half into his wide open mouth.

WE watched Red Pollard as he commenced to chew. We watched him as he swallowed. He wiped his mouth and grinned up at Lucia. "Now that's what I call pannycakes!"

But Lucia still had the doubtful expression as Red Pollard started on the next quarter of pancakes. We three watched as he raised it to his mouth. We saw him hesitate.

I knew what was happening. All he had tasted so far was butter and brown-sugar syrup; the true taste of the pancakes was just reaching him. And all at once he rose, his eyes bugging out. "Crimers!" he said. Then he shot a surprised and accusing look at Lucia, and belched.

Lucia's face went pale. "What's the matter, Alfred?" she said. "Don't you like my pancakes?"

"Like 'em!" Red Pollard choked out. "Wha'd you put in 'em—poison?" With that, his hand flew to his mouth, and he was groping for the door latch. "I want out!" he cried in a muffled voice. "I'm a sick man!"

He plunged out the door, the three of us after him. "Take care!" Hodge snapped as Red Pollard went down the steps. "Watch out for that bull!"

It was too late. Red Pollard stood stiff as a frozen man and saw Pink before him, head down, tail switching. The bull shook himself and let out a snort. Lucia screamed, and Hodge yelled, "Move, you fool!"

Red Pollard screeched and leaped at the same time. He didn't turn back to the stoop but lit out for the nearest of the slender locust trees. With us standing helpless, he reached the tree one jump ahead of the bull. He grabbed the lowest branch and hauled himself onto it a

split second before Pink rammed into the tree, head on.

The tree shook, and the limb swung and swayed. Red Pollard clung to the limb with both hands and feet, twisting and turning as the bull snorted and hooked below him. "Call off your bull!" he shrieked. "Call off your bull, old Hodge Polk!"

I glanced at Lucia. Alarmed though she was, she seemed to think there was something funny in Red Pollard's antics too.

THEN I saw something I hadn't noticed before: a truck backed up to the gate, and Jim Bump getting out of the cab. He ran along the fence, looking up at Red Pollard. "What in hell are you doing up that tree?" he demanded. "Come down out of there and help me put my bull to pasture!"

Hodge snorted in his mustache. "Should've known something funny was going on! That crook hired Red Pollard to buy the bull! Just happens, Jim Bump, that's still my animal!"

Red Pollard screeched, "Call off your damn bull!"

Lucia cried, "Oh, Grampa, can't you help him?"

"Just one thing to do!" Hodge said. He stepped inside the kitchen and came back out with his double-barreled shotgun. Down off the steps he went, straight for the bull.

"Just a minute, neighbor," Jim Bump said excitedly. "You can't shoot that bull down in cold blood!"

"Do something!" Red Pollard shrieked, hitching himself this way and that, trying to keep clear of Pink's horns. "I can't hang on here much longer!"

Hodge cocked the shotgun and raised it to his shoulder.

"Hold on, neighbor!" Jim Bump shouted, running along the fence to get out of the line of fire. "I'm prepared to offer four hundred and a half for that animal!"

Hodge, squinting at the prancing bull, moved a step to the right, looking for a clean shot. "I can't let that bull kill a man, even a Pollard, for four hundred and a half!"

"Neighbor, I've got to have that bull!" Jim Bump cried, running back along the fence. "My cows are going dry, and it's time my heifers started paying for themselves! I'll buy that bull and pay you your own price, cash!"

Hodge lowered the shotgun and looked at Jim Bump. "Neighbor," he said, "you've bought a gentle bull for yourself!"

As Hodge started limping toward the gate, Pink saw him and wheeled. He let out a bellow and started for Hodge. Reaching quickly under the gate, Hodge picked up the chain he had left

there and turned to face Pink. "Open up the gate, Jim Bump," he ordered. "I'll hook this chain into his nose ring, and then he's your animal!"

Hodge walked up to Pink and hit him across the face with the chain. Pink grunted and turned away, and Hodge belted him in the rump, crowding him to the gate. He got close to the bull, grabbed him by the near horn, and snapped the chain into his nose ring. He jumped clear as Pink lunged at him.

"There's your bull, Jim Bump!" Hodge threw the end of the chain over the fence. "Your overgrown heifers will be mighty glad to see him! You can stop in tomorrow and pay me."

"Just a minute, neighbor," Jim Bump said, securing the chain to the back of his truck, and peering anxiously at Hodge. "How much you going to charge me for this bull?"

"I'll think it over," Hodge said, and turned abruptly away.

Jim Bump watched him go, a sick look on his jowly face. He would worry all night over what the bull might cost him.

The truck rolled slowly down the road, pulling the unwilling Pink after it. Red Pollard had departed unnoticed, and Lucia was looking thoughtful. I opened Hodge's shotgun to take out the shells, and found both barrels empty.

"Never keep a loaded gun in the house," Hodge chuckled. "Might be tempted to shoot the cook!"

LUCIA didn't hear that remark; she was on the stoop, a strange smile lighting up her face. Hodge and I saw Joe Grubb, the R.F.D. man, getting out of his car.

"Heard you were selling your bull," Joe said to Hodge. "Thought maybe I could help you."

"Bull's all sold," Hodge said. "Come in to supper, Joe."

Joe found Lucia smiling at him. She felt to see if her hair was piled high enough. She still had the blue ribbon twined in it. "We're having pancakes," she said.

Joe Grubb laughed up at her. "Put 'em on the table!"

Joe and Lucia went inside, and Hodge and I sat down on the stoop. "I was a fool to worry about Lucia being interested in Red Pollard," Hodge said. "She had her mind set on Joe Grubb all the time!"

"Then why'd she make such a fuss over Red Pollard?"

"Guess Joe didn't pay her enough attention," Hodge said. "She had to fret him a little."

—BY R. G. BERRY

MEDICAL REPORT

By Lawrence Galton

 **THAT TWINGE IN YOUR CHEST:** Probably nothing causes men more worry than a pain anywhere near the heart. Many become afraid to live (at least in a normal way) for fear of dying—even when medical examination reveals no heart abnormality. Recently, a top heart specialist, Dr. Arthur M. Master of New York's Mt. Sinai Hospital, completed a long study of this problem. His findings, as reported to the American College of Physicians, will relieve nagging uncertainty for thousands of men. Only if at least three of the following signs are present is there even a probability that chest pain is related to the heart:

» the pain occurs *below* the breast bone and not in the chest;

» is brought on by exertion rather than while resting;

» feels constricting or oppressive rather than aches;

» radiates into the left arm;

» lasts briefly; and

» is relieved by nitroglycerine.

 **TELL IT TO YOUR WIFE:** How good are those expensive face creams some women use to "improve" their skins? In a recent study reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Vol. 154, p. 119), each of 27 women, between the ages of 35 and 65, applied a costly hormone cream to one side of the face and an ordinary face cream to the other side every night before retiring. At the end of three months, a careful examination showed no difference between sides. Some improvement did occur in some women—those with dry skins. But one side of the face didn't improve any more than the other. Conclusion: When the skin is dry, an ordinary face cream may be helpful—and as helpful as the more expensive variety.

 **STOPPING STROKES:** In cerebral apoplexy, or stroke, an area of the brain is destroyed and paralysis and speech changes may occur. It may take months before the paralysis is overcome to some extent and speech restored to normal or near-normal. Stroke is caused when a blood vessel bursts and hemorrhage floods an area of the brain—or when a blood clot plugs a vessel, starving a brain area. Now there's good hope of preventing many strokes caused by clots. Fifty-seven patients who

previously, in a given period, had had 193 blood vessel blockings, 82 of them involving the brain, received treatment with anti-clotting drugs such as dicumarol and heparin. Thereafter, in a period almost twice as long, there were only 24 blood-clot blocks, of which only seven were in the brain. The report was made recently to the American College of Physicians by Dr. I. S. Wright of Cornell University Medical College, New York.

 **NORMAL SIGHT RESTORED:** Once almost blind, a man in Detroit now has useful vision again. So have more than a score of others whose sight has been disappearing as the result of once-hopeless eye diseases. The treatment: ACTH.

Years ago, after dramatic feats in arthritis and many other conditions, ACTH seemed a complete dud when tried for chronic eye problems. It now turns out that the early trials, not the hormone, were inadequate. At Wayne University College of Medicine in Detroit, ACTH was given to 36 nearly-blind patients with long-standing chronic diseases of the retina or optic nerve. Only after long treatment—far longer than ever attempted before—did results begin to appear. Twenty-seven of the 36 regained normal or useful vision, although in some cases it took almost three years of treatment. In all but two, full improvement has been maintained. No panacea for all blinding ailments, ACTH doesn't help glaucoma, cataract or detached retina. Whether it's good for diabetic retinitis and retinitis pigmentosa still remains to be seen.

 **BRIEFS:** Repeated outbreaks of cold sores can be stopped by smallpox vaccinations, according to a report in *Post-graduate Medicine* (Vol. 15, p. 32) . . . The new drug, rauwolfia serpentina, already helpful in combating high blood pressure, now promises to be of some value in psoriasis, the baffling skin disease, and also in rheumatoid arthritis, a doctor notes in *Modern Medicine* (Vol. 22, No. 9) . . . An operation for cerebral palsy looks promising, Dr. R. Zarling of the University of Minnesota reports to the American Academy of Neurology. Eight patients, 16 to 38 years old, palsied from birth and paralyzed on one side of the body, were able to walk and talk after the operation in which half of the upper portion of the brain was removed.

Like all medical advances, those reported here are not 100 percent cure-all. Only your doctor is qualified to judge whether a new development may help in your own particular case. For further advice, see him.

Cold To Warm In 3 Weekends



Everybody knows you must have a professional to blow insulation in the walls of an old house. Here's how you can do it yourself.

BY CARL DREHER

CONTRARY to popular notion, you don't need to hire a contractor, buy elaborate equipment or be an expert carpenter to insulate the walls of your house. You can do the job easily and cheaply by using a method I recently discovered when I insulated the walls of a 2-story, 10-room, 3-bathroom house.

The secret is this: A contractor insulates walls by blowing mineral wool or similar fluffy material into the spaces between studs. You can get about the same result by **pouring in** vermicu-

lite (mica pellets). This idea is thoroughly practical and, as far as I know, new.

» Technique. There's nothing to the pouring itself. All you need is a cardboard carton about 17" x 11" x 10" (approximately 1 cubic foot) equipped with a spout bent from a piece of sheet metal. The spout is fastened to one end of the carton with tacks, the points of which are bent over against the cardboard (see drawings). Filled, the carton weighs under 10 pounds and

is easily managed on a ladder. The end of the spout is inserted in an opening made near the top of the space between the studs and tipped to a 30-degree angle, at which the vermiculite flows freely.

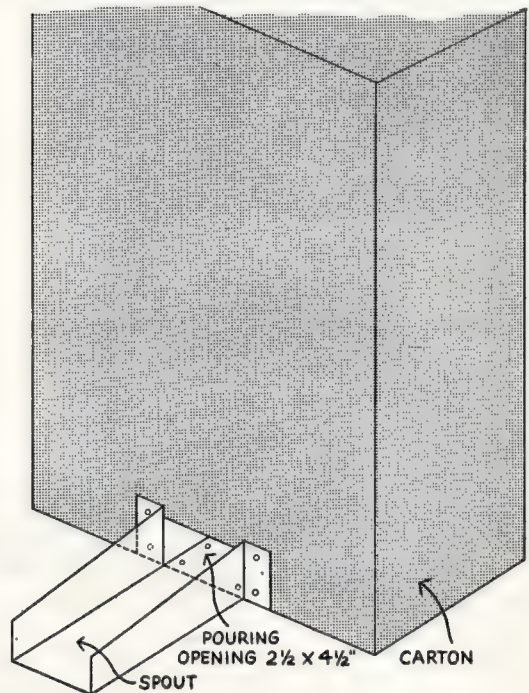
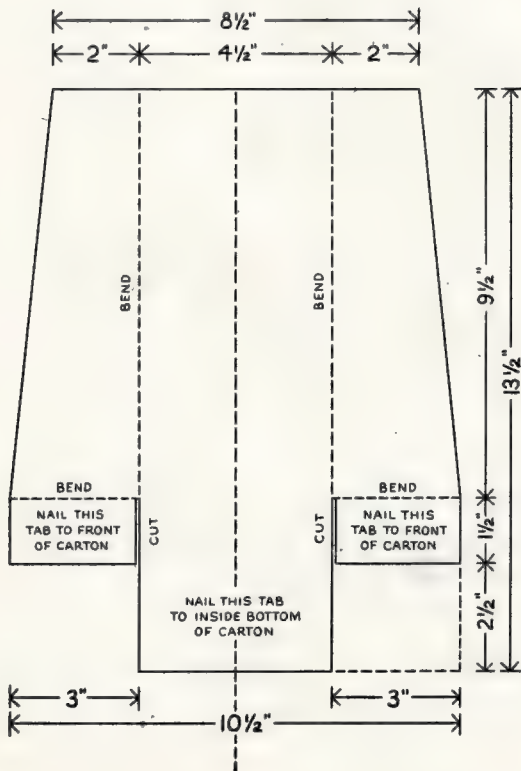
It takes the carton about a minute to empty. With an 8-foot ceiling and studs on 16" centers, each space or "bay" will take about 3 cartons and can be filled in 12 minutes or less. That includes everything—opening the bag in which the mica pellets come, pouring the pellets from the bag into the carton and from the carton into the wall, placing and climbing up and down the ladder, and so on. It also includes stuffing the space above the poured vermiculite with mineral wool blanket, felt, fiberglass or any other insulating material that will pack. This is necessary because the openings for pouring must be about a foot below the eaves or rain gutter to permit tipping the carton to the pouring angle.

Time required for carpentry work depends on the type of construction. Very old (Colonial and Early American) houses, as well as many comparatively recent houses in the South and Southwest, have only siding (clapboard or shingles) on the studs. With clapboard, all you need to do is extract the nails of two adjacent strips, remove the lower strip, pour in the insulation, replace and re-nail the strip, caulk any

cracks and damage and touch up with paint. Total time is about 20 minutes per "bay"—12 minutes for pouring, 8 minutes for carpentry work and restoration.

With walls consisting of sheathing, building paper and clapboard, you remove a strip of clapboard as before, and at each stud cut a rectangular hole in the paper and sheathing 4" high and 12" wide (see drawing). Center the opening over the stud so that you have, in effect, two openings 5" wide on either side of the stud. This allows enough space to admit the spout. The opening can be started by drilling the sheathing with a gimlet or drill and then sawing vertically with a compass saw or half of a 12-inch hacksaw blade held in a clamp-type handle. Saw the two 4" vertical cuts and split the sheathing horizontally with a chisel. Start the vertical cuts at either the bottom or top edge of the board. So you'll only have one horizontal cut to make (either 4" above the bottom edge or 4" below the top edge).

After the pouring, the piece is nailed back onto the stud with a couple of 6-penny nails, the building paper tacked on and the siding replaced as before. Usually 2 strips of clapboard have to be removed and a "bay" will take between 30 and 40 minutes for cutting, pouring and restoring.



Pouring carton is made by cutting and bending sheet metal to form a spout (left), then tacking spout to cardboard box (above).

>> Cash and Labor. If we take as an average a 1-story house 50' x 30', there will be about 80 "bays" to be insulated. (You don't bother under the windows, except where there's a radiator or warm-air register.) At 30 minutes per bay, total time for the walls will be 40 man-hours or less than 3 weekends of 2 days each. Under the worst conditions, 53 hours will be required. If there's a full upper air space, insulating it may take another 17 hours. So figure 70 hours for one man to insulate the whole house.

Vermiculite costs about \$1.40 a bag (18 pounds, 4 cubic feet). Sixty bags, costing around \$84, will be needed for the walls of this more or less typical house. Add \$6 for stuffing above the vermiculite: \$90 in all. Overhead insulation will run slightly under that. Total cash outlay for full insulation should not exceed \$175. You can count on getting that back in fuel savings in 5 years. If you air-condition, the insulation will pay for itself even faster.

>> Tools. I don't recommend that amateurs use power tools on a ladder. I did the job with the following hand tools:

- 20' wood extension ladder
- Carpenter's hammer
- Pry bar, 16"
- Wrecking bar, 18"
- Screw driver, 1/2" x 8" blade
- Putty knife
- C-clamp, 2"
- Compass saw
- Hacksaw blade with handle
- Drill
- Chisel, 3/4"
- Scissors
- Nail puller
- Nail set
- Pouring carton

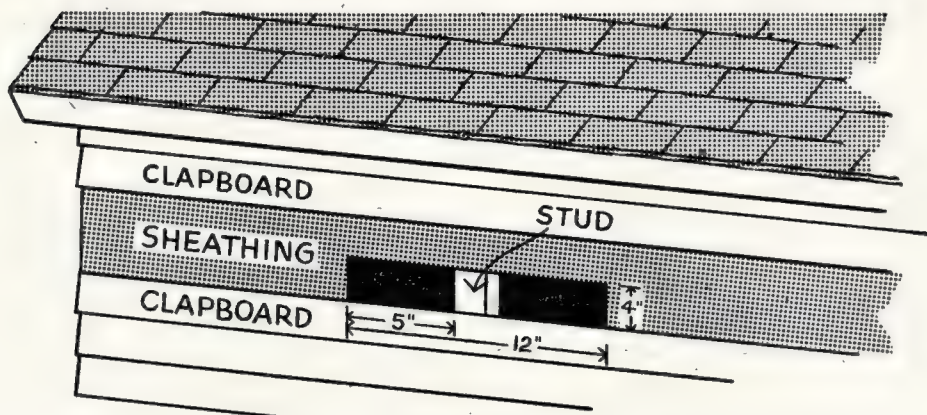
People who work around the house have most of these tools except the pouring carton, which they can make in a half an hour.

>> Selective Wall Insulation. The 10-room house whose walls I insulated already had overhead insulation and the oil bills weren't too bad. I didn't intend to insulate further, but there was a television room where the viewers had to sit against the outside walls. The room was warm enough, but the people's backs were cold. The only remedy was insulation, and I worked out the pouring scheme for the television room alone. But I found it so easy that I did the whole house.

In general, overhead insulation pays off in fuel savings, wall insulation in comfort. The attic is the first place to insulate in a finished house which has no insulation at all. Storm sash should take precedence over wall insulation.

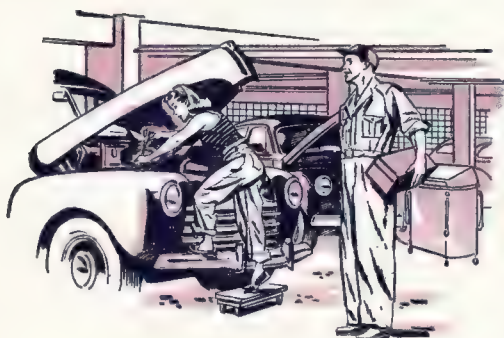
>> Condensation Hazard. Water vapor borne by warm air may condense against the cold inner surface of sheathing or siding and cause trouble. This can happen in an uninsulated and even in an unheated house. But insulation aggravates the trouble because it keeps the outside walls colder. To guard against condensation to some degree, blanket or bat insulation is provided with an integral vapor barrier on the warm side. Loose fill insulation, such as vermiculite, lacks this protection. It can be added in the form of a separate—and in fact superior—vapor barrier of aluminum foil or paint undercoat on the inside of the walls, but that may entail extensive redecorating. What are the chances that this will prove necessary if you insulate the walls in the manner described?

The chances are pretty much the same as when you have insulation blown into the walls professionally. Tens of thousands of homes have been insulated in that way and very few have



Insulation is poured into spaces between studs. Drawing shows how strip of clapboard near eaves is removed and holes are cut in sheathing on either side of stud to admit spout of pouring carton.

The Do-It-Yourself Garage



TIRED of the fancy car-repair prices you have to pay these days, and figure you could almost, if not quite, do the job yourself?

Well, up in Montreal, Peter Staruch has opened a "Do-It-Yourself Garage" to accommodate people of that persuasion. The way it works is this:

Say your car has been giving you trouble. You drive to Mr. Staruch's garage. For \$2.75 you may have the use of a repair stall for fourteen hours—also a hoist and jacks and stands. If you need other tools that you haven't brought along—such as extension lights, welding units, paint guns—well, you can obtain same at moderate rates.

Then all you have to do is fix the car yourself.

Of course, Mr. Staruch is always around to give you advice on just what to do. The advice is free—it goes with the regular stall-rental fee. And if you find yourself running into trouble, Mr. Staruch will lend you a physical hand. Sometimes, with some of the clumsier, if well-meaning, motorists, he "practically holds the wrench all the way through the job." But some people, with little or no practical experience before, wind up doing a

major transmission or motor job practically all by themselves.

The jobs are varied, ranging anywhere from a faulty clutch to what amounts to practically a complete overhauling. Some customers even bring in their cars to do their own body-work, welding and painting. One young kid came in with a new Jaguar and started taking apart the carburetor—with the determination of youth to be on his own as much as possible. It was three days later before the youth, a little wobbly but with chin held high, finally drove out again.

Mr. Staruch's stalls have been full practically ever since he opened his do-it-yourself garage. Business has been so good, as a matter of fact, that he's had to establish an advance reservation set-up. He has 16 stalls—excluding spraying and drying rooms, which cost a little extra—and he does all the floor supervising of the homespun mechanics himself.

He has quite a few women customers, though they're usually accompanied by male friends. Most of these ladies insist, though, on getting hold at least of some of the wrenches and doing at least some of the grunting and groaning. One man recently drove up all the way from New York City to over-haul his car here, figuring he'd have himself a nice little sight-seeing trip and still come out a little ahead financially over what it would cost him to get the job done in a regular garage.

Mr. Staruch not only believes that his do-it-yourself garage is here to stay, but is convinced that the idea is bound to spread. He has two reasons for this belief: 1. People are getting a little weary of paying high auto-repair costs, even those who can afford it. 2. Most individuals are just natural-born tinkers, anyway.

—BY HAROLD HELFER

given trouble. One reason is that many of these houses are self-ventilating to a degree sufficient to dissipate the water vapor which gets into the walls. Another must be that as a group these older houses are more spacious than houses of recent construction in the same price range, thus avoiding harmful concentrations of water vapor.

If your house is on the large side, not too tight, and not crowded by people, you can forget about condensation. If it is small and tight and there is a lot of cooking, laundering, and bathing,

insulate only the uncomfortable areas and in particular avoid the kitchen and bathrooms. (But most houses fitting this description are of very recent construction and were fully insulated, for better or worse, by the builder.) If your house has asphalt siding or other impermeable material on the outside, don't insulate it yourself. It's a job for a professional, and a knowledgeable one at that. And *any* house, with or without, a vapor barrier, will benefit by an exhaust fan in the kitchen.

—BY CARL DREHER

How Did This Happen To Me?

BY RALPH W. SLONE



When you have 11 kids, says this battered father, you finally conclude that children should be seen but not had.

"DADDY," Kathleen Elinor said, leaning on the arm of my chair and gently exhaling a pink bubble about the size of your fist. "Why is it that some little children have no brothers and sisters?"

I am afraid I did not quite understand her question. This was not because she did not speak loudly and clearly—all the little Slone children speak *quite* loudly and clearly, with or without bubble-gum. Nor did the subject matter of the question itself give me pause. As a veteran father I am accustomed to dealing competently and promptly with inquiries ranging widely from the most abstrusely esoteric to the most crassly functional. What bothered me was the sudden commotion under my legs.

Examining this commotion closely, I found that Larry was angry at Edgar because Edgar had bitten him on the ankle, while they were discussing who was to use Daddy's saw. Edgar is a better sawyer, but Larry is senior.

"Daddy," Kathleen Elinor repeated equably, blowing a somewhat larger bubble as she watched the two little boys scamper away, both now bel-

lowing. "Why is it that some little children have no brothers and sisters?"

I am sorry to say I did not quite catch this either, since it occurred to me at that moment to wonder why they needed the saw. They needed it, I learned, to saw their bunk-bed apart.

"Daddy," Kathleen Elinor asked as I resumed my chair. "Why is it that some little children have no brothers and sisters?"

This time I was able to give my full attention to her question and, unlike some others from this source, I found it one I was peculiarly well qualified to answer. Kathy, who is six, has ten brothers and sisters.

This pre-adolescent horde, augmented by myself, my wife Dorothy, and an Indian girl—when we can get and keep one—who helps Dorothy with the laundry and mopping-up, occupies quite completely a standard four-room U. S. Government quarters. The Government, a somewhat unimaginative landlord, believes firmly in the statistical truth that the average American family has 2.3 children. In the standard Government quarters there is one double bed,

two single beds, and one three-quarter crib. Last year, after a horrified study of my dependency report, some blessed individual in the higher echelons authorized the construction of stairs to provide additional sleeping space in the attic. This helped some, but not quite enough. My share is half a bed, one dresser drawer, six inches of the north end of the closet and a chair in the corner where the light is poor.

I am not complaining, really. This is an equitable enough distribution, except that I have to battle even for it. Just last week, when I went to get a clean shirt, I found the space supposedly reserved for my linen occupied by a battered rag doll, a wheel-less truck, and half a dozen used all-day suckers. My shirts I found after some search in the bottom of the baby basket.

I support this family, as well as I am able, on my pay as a bureaucratic parasite, grade GS-9, in the Civil Aeronautics Authority. Now, regardless of what Senator Byrd may tell you, very few civil servants die rich. On the other hand, GS-9 is fairly well up the ladder, and a family should be able to live, if not comfortably, at least adequately, on the salary. My family doesn't. Yes, I know, I read *Cheaper by the Dozen*. In fact, one Christmas that's all Dorothy and I got from our friends: copy after copy of *Cheaper by the Dozen*. Not very entertaining, when read just as the Christmas bills are coming in. We would have preferred a few bundles of diapers.

The Straight Answer

I have to supplement my income with Alaska's limited repertoire of garden vegetables and as many salmon and moose as I am able to snare. Lately even this has not been enough. I have had to cancel my subscriptions to scientific journals, sell my stamp collections, and reactivate an abortive earlier career of writing for pay in my spare time. A poor occupation, incidentally, for a grown man with 11 children. It keeps you inside where they can come at you easily.

Having imparted this brief background, I think you will agree I am exceptionally well qualified to discuss any questions about the national birthrate.

So I answered Kathleen Elinor firmly. "Some little children have no brothers and sisters, because their daddies are much smarter than your daddy."

Kathleen Elinor smiled fondly, to show she knew Daddy only jested, as he so often does. I grinned right back at her, because in this particular instance, Daddy was not jesting. Not even an eensy-teensy bit. Some subjects are not a fit subject for jest.

I have studied this matter exhaustively, with increasing quiet desperation through the years, and I am afraid I must report the facts are in-

escapable: Only very stupid people have 11 children. Smart people have only one. Smarter people yet have none.

According to the U. S. census of 1950—I told you I have studied this question seriously, I think in my position you would do the same—the average Ph.D. has little better than half a child. The average college graduate has one. The average high-school graduate has two-and-eight-tenths. The average moron has 16.

Neo-Malthusians, eugenists, and other amateur social engineers have worried over this distribution for years, and they have advanced various explanations for it. Not too long ago an article in a popular magazine developed in intricate detail the rather peculiar thesis that Americans have a psychopathological hatred for children. This is a very pretty theory, good for about 12 hundred bucks, I estimate, at space rates, and probably I am presumptuous in questioning it.

Certainly I would be a fool to put myself up in an intelligence test against the author of that article, who if I remember correctly has only one child, and thus is statistically right up there in the top mental bracket.

On the other hand, I do have the advantage of years of patient observation.

I don't think Americans really hate children. They are simply smart enough to see there is no percentage in them. And, of course, the smarter they are the more clearly they see this.

Time was, not so very many years ago, when many sons were as arrows in a strong man's quiver. They did his spring plowing and saw to it that his neighbors spoke respectfully to him. They were an economic asset, like livestock. Nowadays, in our modern world of mechanized efficiency and fold-away kitchenettes, unless you happen to be in the house-wrecking business they are just an expensive luxury. Rich men may find it expedient to keep a few for show purposes, but working couples are wiser to stick to Pomeranians.



Thoughtless readers may feel I am presenting a needlessly gloomy picture, especially if they have no little angels of their own to tomahawk each other with Daddy's pipes and play shinny with Mama's best china. To bolster their fatuity, lately there has been quite a rash of articles in our national press with titles somewhat as follows: "I Have 12 Kids and Hope to Have 12 More"; "How the Jones' Raised 15 Lovely Children on a Railroad Retirement Pension"; or "I Love Every One of My 11 Little Darlings." I get to read all of these—people seem to take a delicately sadistic delight in mailing me clippings of them.

Putting the Best Face Forward

Now, I am not going to make the obvious comment on the fact that most of these articles bear the telltale stamp "as told to," with some obviously literate person's name as the second term of the proposition. People who have 12 or 15 or 11 little darlings have grief enough without suffering insinuations from their fellow philoprogenitors.

Naturally, people try to put a good face on their mistakes, and as long as they happen to be stuck with 15 kids, think it would be nice if everyone else were in the same boat. Misery, as I am sure you must have heard, loves company. People don't like to admit they are stupid—I don't myself, and I wouldn't be writing so frankly if my inexorably expanding grocery bill (\$384.56 last month) didn't force me to, and if the market weren't already heavily oversold by people explaining how much fun it is to have 11 children. On the rare occasions when we have adult visitors—rare because most of our friends are intelligent enough to give our home a *very*

wide berth—I too find myself talking a good sales line, just as if I had planned it that way.

"Why," I say expansively, "you don't know what you're missing. Patter of little feet, clatter of little voices—you know, something doing every minute. Just like a circus. Never get bored with a large family. Never have time to get bored." (Never have time for nothin', to be exact, including eating and sleeping; but of course I don't say this.)

"I'm sure it must be wonderful," my friends answer with false heartiness, dabbing surreptitiously at the chocolate smears with a handkerchief and gently dislodging three or four of their fascinated little audience. "Such lovely little darlings, too. I really do envy you and your wife. But then you know how it is—uh—budget—uh—housing situation—uh, you know—doctor's orders—"

I know only too well.

When I was younger and more naive, I used to wonder wistfully who their doctors were. Each time a new doctor came to town, I hopefully presented myself to him.

"Doc," I would say, "I don't feel so good. Can't sleep nights." (With 11 children, and children's thirsts being what they are, this is not really surprising.)

After 35 dollars worth of X-rays, blood tests, specimens, probings, poundings, etc., the doctor calls me into the office.

"Sit down," he says gravely, and shuffles an assortment of penciled forms, lifting his eyebrows and "tsk-asking" now and then. I brace myself for the worst.

"How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?" he asks.

"About two packs," I answer. This is not really as bad as it sounds. Often I only get a puff or two. In our household, there are always one or two infants of cigarette-eating age; as soon as I lay a butt down, it is gone. If things are in something of an uproar, as is quite commonly



TWIST OF FATE



COTY

Fate helped launch the world's most famous manufacturer of perfume.

Early in his business career, Francois Coty called on the buyer for a famous Paris department store. Awkward and nervous, the youth got nowhere; he couldn't even persuade the man to let him open the bottle holding his sample.

Turning to leave, young Coty accidentally dropped his bottle. It broke, and several customers turned to see what had happened. Coty promptly went into a recital of the virtues of his product, and won several expressions of interest.

Turning back to the buyer, he made the first sale of his perfume, for delivery to those who had whiffed it on the spot. After that, he found it hard to produce enough to meet the demand spurred by the hand of Fate.

—BY WEBB GARRISON

the case—kids pulling hair, screaming, falling downstairs, wetting pants, grabbing kitchen knives, pulling over tea-kettles, etc.—I may light five or six before I get a single drag.

"Hmmm, yes, I see," the doctor says. "How much do you drink?"

"Not as much as I'd like," I answer quite honestly. "But as much as I can afford." With 11 children to feed, this actually brings me uncomfortably close to being a teetotaler. Last year, in a desperate effort to beat the situation, I set a batch of blueberry wine. I worked my fingers to the bone picking those blueberries, and it distressed me to find how rapidly they evaporated as the process of fermentation proceeded. When there was only about a gallon left, and the batch was still not ready to bottle, I commented on this to Dorothy. "Why," she said, "I thought you knew. The children have been drinking it. They love blueberries so, you know."

That afternoon I came home from work early to check on this, and it was all too bitterly true. At 3:30 all my own children, plus seven or eight of the neighbors', came romping in from school with happy shouts, snatched the cover off, and gathered around the crock with a ladle. I put an immediate stop to the Saturnalia with my pancake turner—I prefer a pancake turner, since it does not leave large black-and-blue welts for nosy neighbors to comment upon—but of course it was too late to save much of the wine. Luckily, they have not yet learned to like good smoky Scotch, but neither, unluckily, does Scotch grow on bushes.

But to return to the doctor:

"Ahh, hmmm, yes," the doctor says. He

picks up an X-ray and studies it disapprovingly. "Well, better cut down to one pack a day and lay off the liquor. Maybe one or two drinks before dinner, no more. We're not young any more, you know. As we get a little older, we have to watch that heart, you know."

Isn't there a Limit?

"Doctor," I say hesitantly, "don't you think —ah—11 children [or six or seven or eight or nine, whatever the current number may be] are —ah—enough for a man in my condition? Don't you think we—ah—ought to try not to have any more?"

I hang breathlessly on his answer.

"Eleven children?" he gasps. "Did I hear you say 11 children?"

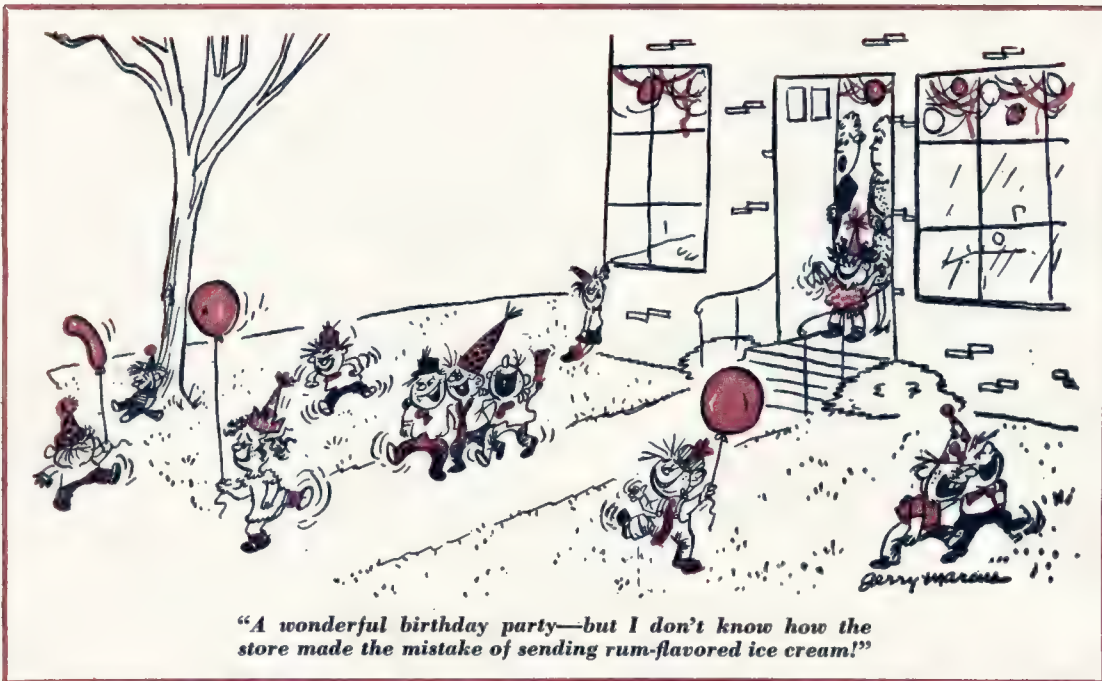
I nod wordlessly.

"Very unusual," he says, recovering his aplomb. "Very very unusual. Eleven children. Bless my soul." He studies me with a new and calculating interest.

"Nonsense," he says briskly. "Never saw a man in better shape in my life. Not a thing wrong with you. Tough as hickory. No reason you shouldn't have a dozen. [Lately the ante has gone up to two dozen.] Wish I had a family like that myself, but then, you know—uh—budget—uh—housing situation—uh—you know—"

Dorothy tells me she encounters similar reactions.

For a long time, this puzzled me. It was not until quite recently that the direct relation between large families and numerous obstetrical fees suddenly struck me. Well, at least I have scotched that little angle. The last five I have



"A wonderful birthday party—but I don't know how the store made the mistake of sending rum-flavored ice cream!"

delivered myself, with the help of our local nurse. Five more deliveries, and I will be qualified as a licensed midwife—a handy ace in the hole, should Senator Byrd get to be chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

Actually, doctors get very little of our money. I have become rather adept at minor surgery, and our children seem quite tough and healthy. I suppose they have to be to survive. Last summer Dorothy Margaret, the youngest at that time, unhooked the upstairs window screen and dove out. By the time Dorothy (senior) had called me and I had run home, Dorothy Margaret was in fine voice again, and the only serious damage I could find was to her feelings.

"Bad Daddy!" she kept sobbing, striking at me with her little fists. I suppose she must have landed on her bottom, and associated the resultant sensation with its most common source. Poor little devil. It must have seemed to her she hardly deserved such a really king-size spanking, even for climbing out the upstairs window.

Incidentally, this is a point on which I find myself in constant disagreement with the non-parents among my friends.

"How can you bear to beat the little dears?" such innocents inquire reproachfully, eyeing Johnny's shy blue-eyed smile and Betty K.'s happy industry, as she bustles about emptying their ashtrays and pouring tea; watching Joanne dexterously change the baby with one hand as she flips the pages of a funny book with the other.

To this I can only reply it is no strain at all. In the kind of grim life-and-death struggle our

family life epitomizes, it is every man for himself. I may be outnumbered, but I still have the advantage of weight and reach.

In some cases, of course, I can avoid an actual show of force by recourse to strategy. I have developed a number of simple tricks which serve very well, at least until they grow old and wise enough to outsmart me. (I sometimes think I note incipient indications of this development at around the age of eight.) One method on which I rely quite heavily is based on my still superior vocabulary and power of abstraction. I find that by seizing on a key word in one of their statements and punning on it, I can frequently confuse the little codgers enough to get by.

For example, if Shirley Florence comes up to me and says: "Daddy, do pigs fly?" I answer promptly and confidently: "Why, no, sweetheart, flies walk on the ceiling upside down."

I find it takes her several minutes to establish the connection between question and answer (children of this age think in *Gestalt*, rather than analytically), which besides stimulating her infant mentality lets me get on with a few more pages in my book. There is also a reasonable chance that her telescopic little eyes will spot a fly before the process of cerebration is complete and she will wander off to see if it really does walk on the ceiling upside down, giving me time to finish the chapter. With practice, these reactions in the parent become semi-automatic. If they did not, no parent's sanity would survive his second child.

Dorothy handles the matter somewhat dif-

ferently. She has evolved a controllable selective block in her auditory system which releases only when the question contains overtones of mental anguish or pain. This works fine for her, but unfortunately, she has also come to apply it to me in absent-minded moments. I find it quite undignified to be compelled to scream or sob when I just want her to please pass the butter.

In some cases, a more elaborate counter is indicated. I think I mentioned above that adult visitors to our home are uncommon. This is not the case with pre-adolescents. In addition to our own 11, we usually have a dozen or so of the neighbors' to cope with—I suppose they find the atmosphere more congenial than adult-dominated gathering places. The numerical increment here is not so important; after 11 children there are only big batches of kids and little batches of kids. What does prove confusing is the necessity for distinguishing two distinct *genera* of children, Slone children and neighbors' children. This is often especially trying at bedtime, when a man may not be at his most alert.

What Happened to Dougie?

At our house, nominal bedtime for the younger children is seven. This is not the time they go to bed, it is the time we start putting them to bed. It is my practice to station myself by the bedroom door at that time, and catch them one by one as they buzz past intent on this or that childish activity. The screaming process here is automatic. The younger children, being noisiest and most careless, are caught first. As they grow older, they learn to creep quietly off into a corner as bedtime approaches, and thus get to stay up a little longer. Little guests who stay past seven, however, being immune to bed-ding, enormously complicate this pattern.

Last summer we were particularly troubled by one persistent little fellow who insisted on remaining each night until the last dog died. Several times I would catch him by error as he darted past (one four-year-old towhead looks much like another at that time of evening) and then be forced to release him when I learned my mistake. Naturally I found this irksome, though he thought it great fun, and I gave the problem my most serious attention.

The next time I caught the little devil, I rushed him into the bathroom and began to scrub his face vigorously. His jaw dropped in sudden fearful surmise.

"I don't *need* my face washed," he wailed. "I'm *clean*!"

"No complaints!" I shouted firmly. "No complaints!" I carried him into the bedroom, stripping off his pants.

"But I don't *have* to go to bed," he sobbed bitterly. "I'm not Larry, I'm *Dougie*. Besides, I had a big nap—"

"No complaints!" I bellowed, drowning his cries. "Get in the sack! Tuck in! Shut up! Next customer! NEXT!"

"Daddy," Patricia Anne said firmly. "That's not Larry, that's Dougie."

I peered closely. "Well, bless my soul," I said. "So it is. Well, too late now: He's sacked. Next time we'll have to be more careful."

I resumed my post by the door, alert for another victim. As I turned my back, a towheaded figure slipped by like an eel, sobbing in great gasps, pants in one hand and shoes in the other, out the door and heading for home.

The experiment, I am happy to report, was a complete success. We had no further difficulty with Dougie.

These, of course, are the moments I like to recall and dwell on lovingly; the times when through wit and skill I triumphed over appalling odds. Unfortunately, they come all too seldom. Life with 11 children is more often a dogged rear-guard action against piles of soggy diapers, bottomless appetites, and paper boats in the wash basin. I desperately need these little infrequent victories to bolster my courage.

People often ask me: "Just how did you get yourself in a fix like this, Mr. Slone? What would you say has been the key factor?"

Delicacy forbids me to be too specific in answering this query; but probably my initial mistake lay in marrying a fatally attractive woman—one of those statuesque, corn-fed beauties the Middle West still produces. By the time my first infatuation had begun to fade in the light of rude reality, we already had five or six children, and had established a fundamental pattern in our marriage we found surprisingly resistant to change.

"Well, heck," I would say, "as long as we've gone this far, one more probably won't matter."

"No, I suppose it really wouldn't," Dorothy would reply thoughtfully. "We *could* set up that extra crib your mother gave us."

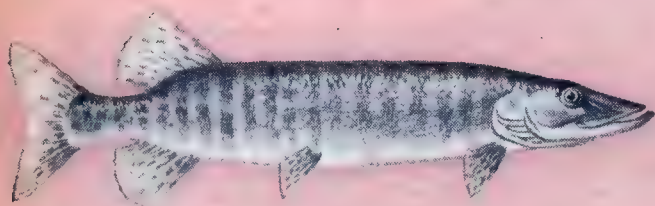
And the next thing we knew, sure enough I would be boiling water on the stove and setting up the extra crib. As simple as that are the steps on the road to disaster.

It could happen to you.—BY RALPH W. SLONE



Angler's Almanac

By Robert C. McCormick



THIS MONTH'S STAR:

Muskellunge—Also called *Lunge*, *Longe*, *Chautauqua* (or *Ohio*) *Muskellunge*, *Great Lakes Muskellunge*, *Wisconsin Muskellunge*, *Northern* (or *Tiger*) *Muskellunge*.

MARKINGS: Surest way to tell musky from other pikes (northern pike, pickerel) is its huge size, plus absence of scales on lower half of both cheeks and gill covers. Largest of pike family, musky is long, relatively slim, has snout-like mouth full of razor-sharp teeth. Average size: 10-30 or more pounds. Record: 69 pounds, 11 ounces, caught in Chippewa Flowage, Wis., Oct. 20, 1949.

HABITAT: Great Lakes Muskellunge live in St. Lawrence River, the lakes and northward into Canadian drainage area; Chautauqua-Ohio species in Western New York lakes, plus Ohio and Tennessee River systems as far south as North Carolina; Wisconsin species in nationally famed musky waters of both Wisconsin and Minnesota. All three hang around protective covering of weed beds, sunken logs, dead-tree stumps, etc., in shallow bays of lakes and large rivers. But hot weather usually forces fish out into deeper, cooler waters in summertime. In smaller streams, a single large musky will move into the deepest pool, there to remain virtual king of the roost until either caught or removed by nature; once coast is clear, another big one soon takes its place, ad infinitum. Muskies spawn quickly in shallows in April-May; then, leaving fry to fend for selves, as they rush madly back to protective covering where they lie in wait for diet of forage and small game-fish, baby muskrats, ducklings, snakes, mice, squirrels, frogs, etc., to come within easy reach.

HOW TO CATCH: Since a good share of muskies are taken unexpectedly by bass fishermen, best artificials are king-size editions of all favored bass lures—underwater plugs, jointed minnows, spoons, bucktail-spinner combinations, giant streamer flies, plus top-water bugs, poppers and noisy surface-plugs. Despite fact that, as of this season, biggest musky ever reported taken on spinning equipment was small as muskies go (27 pounds), you still can catch a truly big one if you'll use only heaviest possible spinning rod, 12-15 pound test line. Otherwise, heavy bait-casting equipment is your best bet: short, stiff rods, 20-30 pound test line, foot-long stainless steel leader. As indicated, the unpredictable musky is a tacklebuster without peer among fresh-water fish, yet has its devotees among streamer fly fishermen, too. (Seven-ounce fly rod, A or B level line, plus steel leader.)

Best way to go after muskies is to hire a guide, take his advice—and pray! Though fish are also caught by trolling, still-fishing live suckers, most muskymen pitch their accurate tosses to musky hide-outs in effort to lure lurking fish out of protective covering. And by all means, be prepared for a long quest; while other anglers figure their results at so many fish per day, muskymen figure theirs at so many days (or weeks, or years even) per fish. Once you connect, though, results will be worth it; best advice then is to sit tight, let fish have its way until tired out—and don't panic! Remember: latter takes some doing especially, since, in still-fishing, you'll have to wait from five minutes to a half hour before musky swallows bait after striking; only then can you set the hook.

September Hotspots

Northeast: Normally, first cooling breezes around Labor Day start fresh-water gamefish feeding ravenously in preparation for long winter ahead. This is true of all your favorites—bass, pike, pickerel, trout (in states and waters where season's still open) plus, of course, the musky. Best bets for latter from now to season's end in northeast is New York's Chautauqua Lake, Niagara and St. Lawrence Rivers (on Canadian side of Thousand Islands), the northern New York side of Lake Champlain from Rouses Point down through the Chazy River section and up the river to Mooers Dam, northeastern Pennsylvania's French Creek and Edinboro Lake (formerly the Conneautsee) near Meadville.

Except for Chautauqua and the St. Lawrence, you'd best forget about going for muskies per se in any of those waters; concentrate on the bass, walleyes, other species present and hope a musky takes. In Chautauqua, though, you'll do your musky fishing now using live bait;

at the Thousand Islands, you'll need a guide to show you where to cast your lure. Remember: both annually produce consistently large fish (40-50 pounds) ranking with biggest caught anywhere. For other species: try bass-bugging weedy shoreline now; big, late-season trout may still be taken from New York's Esopus and Delaware Rivers, plus any of Maine's lakes and ponds; all trout rivers above tidewater (to September 15).

For salt-water specialists: On basis of early-season sport, striped-bass angler should have a field day all along northern half of Atlantic Coast during September. Stripers will be schooling up this month preparatory to fall migration south, may be taken in numbers both from the surf and trolling. For best waters, see August BLUEBOOK, or try anywhere in the Martha's Vineyard area, especially around Gay Head, the Squibnocket mussel beds and the Island of Cuttyhunk, plus southern shores of Cape Cod, around either end of the Cape's ship canal.

South: Despite fact muskies are native to northern, colder waters, you can still tie into a fair-sized Chautauqua-Ohio type down south—especially if, again, you're fishing for something else. Don't be surprised, for example, if you suddenly hang a muskie while plugging (or bugging) for bass in any of the better streams of Kentucky, Tennessee or North Carolina.

Otherwise, your best bet is to go after both large and smallmouth bass in a score of streams in those three states. Outstanding, fast-running bass waters in which muskies occasionally turn up include Kentucky's Green River near Henderson, Barren River near Bowling Green, Red River near Stanton, Licking River near Cynthiana, Kinnickinnick Creek near Vanceburg, Tygart Creek near Greenup and Triplett Creek near Morehead; Tennessee's Obey River and Dale Hollow Reservoir near Celina; North Carolina's Little Tennessee River both above and below Fontana Reservoir, plus the French Broad River fished

anywhere between Asheville and Brevard, N. C.; latter is one of the best smallmouth-bass streams in entire southland, and fall fishing should begin to get good sometime during September.

Elsewhere below Mason-Dixon line, fishing's just getting good again in all TVA lakes, not only for bass and walleyes, but also for saugers, white bass, crappies and truly big bluegills (1½ lb. av.) as well. Catfishing, too, should be on upgrade, and many's the big one (50 lbs. and up) to be taken on downstream side of any one of the dams. Best: Pickwick Dam near Savannah in southern Tennessee. If it's truly big crappies you want, try Eagle Lake and Buck Chute 20 miles north of Vicksburg, Miss.

For the salt-water specialist: again in September, don't miss waters of Gulf of Mexico off Mississippi (see August BLUEBOOK). Though angling for mackerel and bluefish reached its peak during July-August, thousands should still be hanging around, plus tarpon, seatrout and blackfish.

Midwest: To muskymen everywhere, heavily-populated waters of Wisconsin-Minnesota, plus near-by Ontario, are it, and the fall of the year is THE TIME. Last year, for instance, three of the four biggest muskies reported were caught in September, the top two from North Twin Lake, Wis., (53 lbs., 12 oz.) and Lake of the Woods on Minnesota-Ontario border (51 lbs., 4 oz.)

Though musky lakes are a dime a dozen in northland, best of them all lie in vicinity of town of Hayward, Wis. Based on performance (four new world records in past 15 years), scores of "Hayward Lakes" prove town's claim to its billing as "Musky Capital of America." Best of lot, of course, is Lake Chippewa (or "Chippewa Flowage" locally) which alone gave up 1,200-odd muskies last season. Other good ones: Teal and Lost Land Lakes which together produce 300-odd annually; entire Spider Lake Chain, Calahan, Moose, Grindstone, Upper and Lower Clam, Upper and Lower Twin plus famed Court Oreilles (pronounced

Couderay) which gave up a 67½ pound previous world-record fish in 1949.

In Wisconsin-Minnesota you'd best figure on hiring a guide, at least for the first day. If you headquarter in or around Hayward, your overnight accommodations will run \$3.50-\$7, but you can rent rustic, lakeside cabins for \$25-\$30 a week and up. Guides, plus their boats, cost another \$12-\$15 a day, usually including a shore-cooked dinner. Thus, at rock bottom, you can spend a week fishing muskies in Wisconsin for as little as \$50, plus your meals. And here's a tip: local barber usually is best musky fisherman in town.

Best Minnesota waters: Lake of the Woods (you'll need Canadian fishing license to reach hottest hangouts here), Lake Winnibigoshish in Mississippi River at Federal Dam, entire Mantrap Chain of Lakes in Hubbard County, especially Big Mantrap, Upper and Lower Battle, Sand and Bad Axle Lakes, plus Lake Belle Taine.

Rocky Mountains: While muskies are the fare elsewhere in the nation this month, fishing's best now in the West for the glamour fish of the Coast—big tye (king) and silver (coho) salmon, summer-run steelheads—all the way from the Nimpkish wilderness area of British Columbia to the Klamath River in Northern California. Below there, bait-fishing for striped bass around San Francisco (San Pablo Bay, the Carquinez Straits, Suisun Bay and Napa River are best) is at its peak now, too.

Now's the time, though, to plan your wilderness fish-trip to the beautiful Nimpkish River on northern Vancouver Island, B. C. Rough and rugged, trip is strictly for those who'll give up civilized comforts for some of the best salmon-fishing on this continent.

As reported last month, Columbia River between Rainier and the sea produces big salmon just before Labor Day when commercial fishermen are out of the river. Good fishing generally continues on through the month,

too, but it's a good idea right now to check the famed Rogue River in Oregon for start of the late-summer, early-fall steelhead run sometime during September; fly fishing the lower stretches from shore takes the fish this month. Steelheading's good now too on the upper stretches of Washington state's Stilligumish (fly-fishing only), plus practically any place in California's famed Klamath.

Elsewhere in Rocky Mountain states: now's the time to get in to such vacation hotspots as Yellowstone Park, Yosemite, the Jackson Hole country of Wyoming, the alpine lakes and streams of California's Trinity Alps, plus all of Colorado's favored trout waters. With vacationists gone, you'll have from now till snow flies to get your fill of the wilderness type of angling in mountainous regions. Simply drop a line to Chamber of Commerce or postmaster in town of your choice and they'll see that you get all latest information on rates, dates, and accommodations for the experience of a lifetime.



The Guy Who Remembered Ahead

BY MACK REYNOLDS

***He tipped the bookies to seven winners in a row.
Yet the little man wasn't cashing in on his
amazing forward memory. Why?***

A pint-size little square and he sits there on the edge of his chair with his hat in both his hands. He looks kind of sad, like maybe his pooch just died or maybe his old lady has been beating him up more than usual.

Already I got the feeling a bookie's office is the wrong place for him, but I say, "Okay, Mr. Perkins, what's with you?"

Without any build-up he says, "My memory goes both ways."

"Come again?" I say.

He says, "Memory. You know. Most people can only remember what has already happened."

I look at the door, then I look back at him

again, kind of cautious. "I don't get it," I tell him.

He puts his lid down on the floor next to his chair and leans forward and says, "It is a terrible thing, really. You have no idea. You will have to consider it awhile."

"What?" I keep getting the feeling every other sentence is being left out of this conversation. "Consider what?"

"Memory going both ways," he says. "Don't you see? You not only know what *has* happened, you know what is *going* to happen."

I have to get into this some way or other. I take a breath and say, "What's wrong with that?"

You wouldn't even have to mess with these bang-tails. You could play the stock market, be in the gravy."

He looks at me disapprovingly and says, "Don't you like free enterprise? How would you like to turn a man loose on the capitalist economy who was capable of seeing the future?"

I think it over. I can see the whole country in maybe six months belonging to one guy.

BUT I have to get hold of this situation. I push the button for Pete and say, "Sorry, pal, I'd like to hear about it but I ain't got the time."

Pete opens the door, takes one look, and doesn't even bother to come in. He jerks his right thumb. "On the heel and toe, Buster. Outside."

So this Perkins locates his hat and stands up, like it's what he's been expecting. "Very well," he says. "I understand."

He waits until he gets to the door before he turns and says, "For instance, Cry Baby will win this afternoon in the third race at Hialeah. I *could* have laid a heavy wager on her."

That brings a laugh even from Pete.

"Yeah," I say, "you could of, and you still can. That goat!"

So he shuffles out.

"Pete," I say reproachfully to Pete.

He shrugs. "I didn't know it was no weirdie, boss. Says he wants to see you. I think maybe he's got a beef or something."

And that should be the end of it, but it ain't.

Cry Baby comes in and pays off 20 to 1. With odds like that you can see what kind of dead meat she's supposed to be.

Well, anybody can pick a winner once in awhile. I go on home and forget about this Mr. Perkins.

Along about midnight the phone rings. I take it up and it says, "Mr. Throckmorton? This is Newton Perkins."

"Yeah?" I say. "Listen, something funny happened today."

"Yes, I know." His voice sounds kind of sad. "It will be Goofballs Danny in the first, tomorrow."

I say, "You wouldn't want to lay anything on that, would you?"

"Nobody ever believes me," he says, and hangs up.

So Goofballs Danny makes it by the skin of his teeth the next day, paying off about 10 to 1, and that night Perkins phones me again and gives me Teardrop.

When Teardrop comes in, I yell for Pete, and when he sticks his head in the door, I say, "Listen, you know that greenie you let in three

days ago? Name was Newton Perkins. Locate him!"

Pete doesn't locate him, but it don't make any difference. Perkins shows up late that afternoon anyhow. He sits in the same chair and puts his lid the same place on the floor.

Without no preliminaries, I say, "Okay, tell me about it."

He's embarrassed. He says, "It sounds ridiculous."

"Yeah, it sure does. Tell me about it."

"It was after my operation." He points behind his ear.

I nod. "Okay, go on."

He says, "That's all there is. Now my memory goes both ways."

I shift around in my chair. "What did the docs say about that?"

"They didn't believe me, I guess. Nobody does."

I say, "Look, pal, calling off three winners in a row is nice stuff but it's been done before without having no memory which goes both ways from the middle."

He sighs, and says, "Are you acquainted with a bookmaker named Mr. Joseph Coty?"

"Joe Coty? Sure."

"You might phone him," he says.

So I pick up the phone and get Joe Coty. "Joe," I say, "this is Throckie. Listen, you know a character named Perkins?"

Joe sputters, real excited, and tells me this guy Newton Perkins gives him three or four winners in a row. I ask him the names and they're all different horses in different races from mine.

Joe's the kind of guy who wouldn't lie to his own wife. I put down the phone.

IN CASE you're slow with your arithmetic anybody who had a hundred-dollar bill and could name seven winners in a row without a miss could own just about all the green in the country.

We sit there for maybe a minute, neither of us saying anything. Finally I say, "Listen, what'd you come to me for?"

Perkins says, "I want to be put on your payroll."

I been trying to figure an in for myself, and now he hands it to me on a platter. "Holy Moses," I say, "you could tell us just what bets to . . ."

He's shaking his head. "If that was what I was interested in, there would be the stock market or the gambling halls, including this, ah, bookie office."

I'm all wrapped up in the idea of what I can do with him. "But look," I complain, "you don't make sense. You just asked for a job."

"It isn't fair," he says. "Nothing I could do

would be fair. Whatever kind of a position I took, I'd have such an advantage over my fellow man that I couldn't bear to face him."

"You sure got principles," I say. In a way I can see his point. Suppose he bet on those nags instead of just telling me they was going to win. I kind of shuddered. "But this job..."

"I've just got to drop—well—drop out of active participation in everyday life," he says. "I want you to pay me fifty dollars a week."

I sit up quick. "For what?"

He looks me straight in the kisser. "For *not* placing bets."

My stomach does a double roll. "Oh, no," I groan.

He nods his head up and down, determined. "Yes, sir. I do not desire millions at the risk of wrecking the economy. 'I'll go off and live by myself, free from temptation. But I require funds.'"

I say, real plaintive, "How come you pick me out of all the characters in this town?"

He looks uncomfortable. "Eeny, meeny, miney, mo."

I groan again. "And I'm Moe, eh?"

"It had to be somebody, Mr. Throckmorton.

I have chosen you and Mr. Coty. If each will put up fifty dollars a week, that will be sufficient for me to live modestly."

"Listen," I say, "how come you don't just lay one or two bets a month, spread it around over all the boys?"

Newton Perkins looks worried and shakes his head. "I must not weaken. If I weaken once, it would be that much easier to do again and again until I lost all restraint."

So we argue some more but deep down I'm a sucker for guys with principle and in the end I put him on the payroll for half a bill a week. He gives me a mailing address, shakes my hand, thanks me, kind of sad like, and leaves.

When he's gone I sit there and think it over. I figure it's better I don't open my trap to any of the boys. If I let them know I'm paying off a guy *not* to place bets, they'll think I'm batty. It'd be worse if they believed me. They'd be sure I was getting tips from the guy and I'd probably wind up in a alley with some ice-pick ventilation.

MAYBE three months later we're all sitting around in Jerry's when Mort Kessler says, "A real strange guy wanders into my place today and wants to talk to me in private. So I take him off to one side and he tells me—get this—he tells me his memory goes both way."

"Wait a minute," Joe Coty says. "Does he give you a horse?"

"He gives me a horse strictly from glue. A real off-beat this guy is; not a marble to his name. The nag comes in last."

Ten minutes later I get Joe Coty to one side. "We been conned," I tell him.

Joe says, "How do you figure?"

"Like this," I says, "This Perkins comes to town and gives every bookie the same tale and each one a horse in a race that's running maybe only four nags. Suppose he starts with a little over a hundred bookies. For about 25 or 30 of them the horse comes in.

"He phones all the winners and gives them another horse and for about eight of these the horse comes in. Then he phones the eight and gives them another horse and a couple of them win again. Me and you, us two suckers."

Joe thinks it over, then grins at me. "He's got one soft spot. It's just a matter of time until we run into somebody like Mork Kessler whose pony didn't come in. Then we wise up."

I put my hand on his arm before we go back to the rest. "We do," I say. "But we don't talk much about it, do we, Pal?"

He shakes my hand away, sour like. "You don't have to tell me, Throckie. I ain't got no memory of what's going to happen tomorrow but I can already hear that yak going up if this here story gets around." —BY MACK REYNOLDS



"This is the quick way down that I was telling you about."

MAN AROUND THE HOUSE

By John Sharnik

Built-in furniture is easy on the eye, pocketbook and housekeeper.

No wonder architects consider it the furniture of the future.

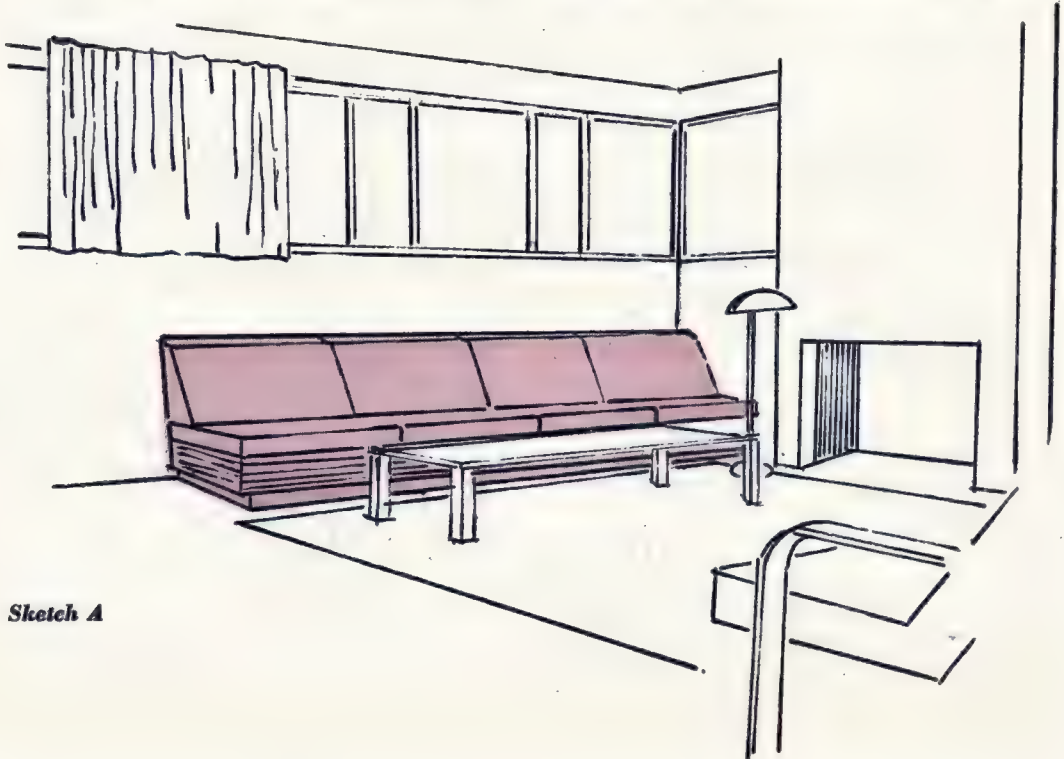
NOT LONG AGO a Washington, D.C., newspaper called on nationally-known architect Joseph Miller to give its readers a preview of "the house of the future." Miller obliged with a sketch and description of a compact, easy-to-maintain, open-plan structure that was bound to please budget-minded wage-earners, work-weary housewives and their play-bent offspring. But it was just as sure to displease department-store owners and furniture dealers. For Miller's house of the future contained very little store-bought furniture.

"Practically all furniture," he wrote, "is built in place."

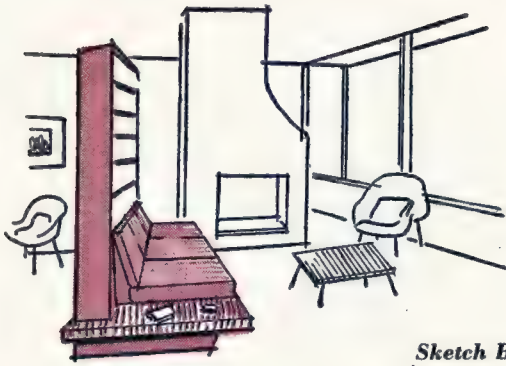
As far as built-ins go, Miller is not so much

a radical prophet of the future as an observer of a current trend. More and more architects are designing—and builders installing—seating, dining and even sleeping facilities as ready-to-use parts of the house itself.

Their reasons make sense: Individually-bought pieces of furniture stand separately in a room, have to be set off by open space if you don't want them to look crowded. But built-ins fit snug to walls, floors and each other. That means a saving of valuable space, making for an airier look to the room, and a reduction in house-cleaning time and effort. The woman of the house doesn't have to shove bulky pieces around the room to get under and between them with



Sketch A



Sketch B

dustmop and vacuum cleaner—she just has to clean up to the edges.

In most cases, there's also a saving in dough—as a few outstanding examples of current built-ins will show.

KING-SIZE COUCH. There's nothing like a low-slung oversize sofa to add a look of luxury to a living room. Trouble is, it's apt to be a tight squeeze for a family with the usual small living-room and budget to match. But take it from a couple of the world's most distinguished architectural firms—Richard Neutra's of California and The Architects Collaborative of Massachusetts—a built-in can beat the rap both ways.

For one thing, since it's custom-made to fit the available space, it'll look natural and in-scale. For another, its simple construction eliminates much of the expense of fancy framing and upholstery work.

One of Neutra's products—a plush-looking affair that fits against a wall (see sketch A)—can be reproduced from the following:

(1) A base made of 2"x3" or 2"x4" framing stock.

(2) A pair of narrow box springs, 26" or 30" wide.

(3) A pair of mattresses or a row of cushions the same width.

For back support, studio couch cushions can be propped against the wall or against a slanted plywood backrest.

COUCH-DIVIDER. A design by The Architects Collaborative (see sketch B) serves several purposes besides just seating. The sofa is part of a space-divider—a partition separating, say, the living room from hall or dining room. The upper part of the partition can be used for open shelves or cupboards. The wide base of the partition supports a platform—a solid slab that can be made of edge-banded $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood or a stock plywood flush door (make it two doors, end to end, if you've got room for a seat that long).

Just set down a row of 4"-thick foam rubber cushions on the slab, add back cushions, and

you've got an expensive-looking sofa. Leave a couple feet of the slab bare at each end, and you've also got a pair of built-in tables, to boot.

HINTS ON COUCH CONSTRUCTION. A tip on measurements from Mario de Fabbro, the furniture designer whose book "How to Build Modern Furniture" is a standard reference work for home craftsmen: Ideal height for built-in seating is 15"-16" from floor to top surface of seat cushion. Ideal depth—from front edge of sofa to point where seat cushion and back cushion meet—is 22".

Another pointer: If you use a flush door for a slab, edge-band the door, leaving a lip of an inch or so projecting on the upper side. This is to keep the cushions from sliding forward under hefty or fidgety guests.

SHUTTLE TABLE. A table that serves both kitchen and dining room—and incidentally acts as a kind of horizontal dumbwaiter between the two places—is the brainstorm of Carl Koch, an architect whose inspired, money-saving simplicity has been noted previously in this column.

One end of the table—an ordinary, four-legged one equipped with casters or gliders—stands in the kitchen, the other end in the dining room. It straddles a pass-through, or counter-high opening in the wall, between the two rooms (see sketch C).

After dinner, your wife doesn't bother to carry the dishes into the kitchen. She simply pushes the table through the wall opening, so that most of the table's surface is in the kitchen. Then, it's not only convenient to clear, but also to set for breakfast. You can, of course, use the table in either room.



Sketch C

Death Rides The Dondrino

A Complete Novel

BY ROE RICHMOND



Death Rides The Dondrino



A Complete Novel by Roe Richmond

"You'll never amount to a damn!" his father had sneered. And now Renner, his manhood proved, was riding home again—into the blazing guns of secret foes.

RENNER WOKE with reluctance. Something made this morning different. Then he groaned, remembering his decision to go home. A drunken notion, of course—but one that had been recurring lately. He had been drifting nowhere way too long. And at 26, Martin Renner felt old and spent, the complete failure his father had predicted.

He got up stiffly, aching in every muscle, and looked at the gashed knuckles of his big left hand. He'd hit Joffey a good one last night. Glad he hadn't had to use a gun. Renner wished Tansill had come himself instead of sending Joff. He would have killed Tansill and ended the matter. He'd have to do it sometime. . . .

Life wasn't fun any more without Glenway. Glen, dead and buried now south of the Rio Grande, where scoured sand hills rolled away to the Sierra Madre. We never should have trusted Coke Tansill and his crew anyway, Renner thought, although things had gone well enough at first. Until the mustangers turned on us and killed Glenway, and I was lucky to make the river and El Paso.

Now Renner was sick of drifting, of peeling broncs and punching cattle and chasing wild horses. He wanted to see his father and try to make friends with him. He wanted to see Emily Hale again, even if she was married and probably had a bunch of kids. And a few others: Guy

Ormond and Doc Seabrey, Benny Blue and old Jubal.

Yes—he was going home to Utah.

Most of all he wanted to show his father he had become a good all-round hand and fighting man, in spite of Rawhide Renner's words: "*You'll never amount to a damn!*"

Downstairs at the desk Renner paid his bill and started out with his saddlebags. The town marshal waited by the entrance, gnawing at his gray mustache. "That fella you hit last night," he said, almost apologetically. "That Joffey. He never come to. He's dead, mister."

"Is that true, Marshal?" It was difficult for Renner to believe. Joffey's head must have struck the brass rail at the base of the bar. "I hit him to keep him from drawing. Plenty people saw it."

"I know that, son. Accidental. But I got to hold you a little. Until after the inquest."

Renner shook his head slowly. "Don't try it, Marshal."

The older man chewed sorrowfully on his tobacco. "I ain't young enough to take you. Have to git my deputies. If I can roust 'em out."

"I'm not going to jail for that," Renner said. "I had to slug him—or shoot him."

"Don't know as I blame you, but I got my duty." The marshal tugged at his drooping mustache. "I'll be lookin' for my deputies."

"Give me time to ride out," said Renner.

The man considered gravely. "You'll have time, you don't stop for breakfast." He turned wearily out the door.

Renner grinned. "Not hungry this morning anyway. Much obliged, Marshal." He went around back to the livery barn and saddled up his coyote dun, the horse bucking a bit when he first got on. Nobody appeared in the street to stop him. Renner turned north, the sun bright and the wind riffling the chinaberry trees and poplars. Good or bad, he was going home. Back to Brandvil on the Dondrino River.

A lone rider, lonelier than ever with Glen gone. Always a lonesome one, for that matter. His mother had died a few years after his birth, and Rawhide blamed him for that, he supposed. The old man had given all his love to the elder brother Doak. And Doak had been shot to death at twenty by a gunfighter named Wolf Leiken. Martin *knew* his father held him responsible in that instance. Sixteen at the time, Mart had been there when it happened, but he hadn't had a gun and couldn't have used one anyway. He'd been frozen with fear. The horror of that moment was still with him at times.

Maybe Rawhide was old enough now to need some help himself. If he needed help with a gun, Mart could give him that now.

Martin Renner rode on, watching the back-trail but not really expecting a posse. Coke Tansill or some of his men might be following up Joffey, though. The rawboned dun was strong and steady under Renner. *Puro espanole* with dark mane and tail and a black stripe down the back. Much horse, in Mexican or any language.

"Come on, Spanish, we're heading home," Martin Renner said, slack in the warm leather. "A place you've never been, horse, and it wasn't a real home to me; but that's where we're going."

He moved northward through desert and badlands country, savage scenes of colorful desolation, and the raw beauty of springtime touched and troubled him. The towns were more American now, and it was a relief to get away from the Mexican-looking ones.

A week and several hundred miles later, the Taloncillo Mountains loomed in rugged grandeur before Martin Renner. Then he could see the deep-notched pass of Red Gap. Beyond lay the Dondrino Valley, Rawhide Renner's great Mill Iron spread, and the town of Brandvil in Utah Territory.

"Home stretch, Spanish," he told the horse. "God's country after what we been through, with real woods and grass and water."

It was pleasant when the steep walls of Red Gap shut out the blazing afternoon. Relaxed in his sweated saddle, Renner let the dun set his

own pace up the long, winding grade. Over the hump and home—if you could call it that. The Dondrino was Rawhide's country and Brandvil his town, but Martin had never been fully at home there.

The incline sharpened, between jumbles of brush-grown boulders, and the *bayo coyote* grunted with the effort of climbing. Craggy red-stone cliffs towered on either side, scarred by slides and fringed with stunted oak and cedar and jackpine. Higher up were the true forests of aspen and pine. Renner pulled up to rest his mount, and drank in the deep-shaded solitude and peace of the uplands.

He heard the solid impact near his right knee, and felt the dun shudder and lurch beneath him. Then the horse was falling, and Renner was kicking out of the stirrups and jumping clear. From the heights on the right side of the pass, the bellow of a high-powered rifle boomed and echoed. Dust clouded the trail as the gelding snorted and thrashed about before slumping into heavy stillness. Renner raked his carbine out of the boot and hit the gravel behind the horse.

Now what the hell? he thought, anger rising through his shocked numbness. Another shot geysered dirt in midroad, and Renner lined his barrel over the saddle and fired three times at the gunsmoke on the mountainside. Not much chance of hitting anything, but he might pin the man down or drive him away.

Renner wondered who could be shooting at him—and why. He had enemies, but none that he knew of in these parts. That sounded and struck like an old buffalo gun, a Sharps .56 or .58, a regular cannon. None of Tansill's boys had a weapon of that caliber. Nobody in the Dondrino knew Mart Renner was heading homeward, unless somebody from Brandvil had spotted him down the line and brought back the word. Even so, why should anyone up here want to kill him? . . . Renner couldn't figure it out.

He fired again at that lofty perch, where smoke was thinning along the escarpment. There was no response. Renner slid back into the ditch and crawled behind a rock cluster. He hammered another shot up the cliff, but there was no return. Maybe the sniper didn't fancy pitting his single-shot weapon against a repeater.

But Renner stayed under cover and watched the flies settle on the dead mustang. Losing a horse like Spanish, the best he'd ever had, was almost as bad as losing Glenway. That coyote dun could do anything. Cutting, roping, night-hawking, working stock in general. And he could outrun and outlast any of them. Now he was dead meat beside a mountain trail.

Illustrated by ED YEBELL

Everything I love dies, Renner thought morbidly, breathing in the odor of damp earth and leaf mould and greening ferns. Mother . . . Doak . . . Glen . . . Spanish . . . and Emily Hale might as well be dead, as far as I'm concerned.

There was no more shooting from above. Renner shaped and smoked a cigarette there, before getting up to remove his bridle and saddle gear from the dead horse.

2

AN HOUR later, burdened with all his gear and the humiliation of a horseman reduced to walking, Martin Renner was plodding wearily toward the summit of the pass. A fine homecoming, horseless and down to a few dollars. He could picture the scorn in his father's stormy eyes and rugged face. Rawhide had no use for failures.

Soaked with sweat and panting in the thin highland air, Renner labored onward, the equipment dragging heavily at his arms. High-heeled boots and long bowed legs were not made for hiking, yet he moved well on foot, for a rider. At the crest he paused to rest and rinse his mouth with canteen water. After a short drink he took off his hat and let the wind cool his damp, reddish-bronze head.

Standing there at ease, Renner was tall and rangy with a strong spread of shoulders, a limber leanness at waist and flank. A much bigger man than when he left this country, and there were other changes. Not many people would recognize him in Brandvil. His smile came, quick and boyish, as he heard the clatter of a stagecoach behind and below in the passage.

The driver hauled up at Renner's signal, the six horses lathered from the climb. The shotgun guard watched him warily.

"Accident, friend?" asked the driver. "Saw a dead horse down yonder."

Renner nodded. "Like a lift into Brandvil."

"Plenty room. Throw your stuff in the rear boot."

There were only three passengers in the Concord. A well-dressed couple occupied the back seat, and a fancy-shirted young man sprawled across the front, sound asleep and exuding a powerful reek of whiskey. Renner hesitated at the door. "I can just as well ride on top."

The woman smiled and gestured. "There's room in here, if you don't mind . . ." Her delicate nostrils twitched slightly.

"Thank you, ma'am." Renner climbed inside with a grin. "I'd rather drink it than inhale it, as a rule. But I guess I can stand a few miles of it."

The gentleman leaned forward. "We should have had that drunk transferred to the deck, Cynthia."

"Let him sleep, Dake. He's such a nice-looking boy. It's really a shame." She seemed sympathetic and understanding, quite regular and considerate for a woman of class and quality. And mighty handsome in a proud blonde fashion, her features clear as cameo.

The coach dipped into the downgrade, swaying on its leather thoroughbraces, the reach-and-bolster crashing in under the floorboards, the brakes rasping in complaint. The man introduced himself as Dake Tirone, and the lady as Mrs. Somebody—Renner couldn't catch the name. In return he gave his Christian name, not wishing to identify himself at once as Rawhide Renner's boy.

"Your horse back there?" inquired Tirone. "Too bad. Looked like a good bronc. You had to shoot him, I suppose?"

"Not me," Renner said dryly. "Somebody else did the job."

They both stared at him, and Cynthia said: "You mean—?"

"Obviously," Tirone said, frowning. "Mr. Martin must have enemies hereabouts."

"Didn't know I had any in these parts," Renner drawled.

"There are lawless elements everywhere in the West," said Tirone. "The Dondrino's no exception, though we try to keep them down." He reverted to casual conversation with the lady.

Occasionally and politely they tried to include Renner in their discussion of general inconsequential things, but he had grown aloof and silent, aware of his worn, dirty clothing in contrast to their well-groomed elegance. He felt more akin to the young rounder on the opposite seat.

The sleeping boy was slender and somehow graceful, even in a drunken sprawl, with black curls tousled above the flushed face, his skin smooth and flawless as a girl's. His shirt, gaudy with red and blue checks, was soiled and torn. A gun belt lay at his feet, and a hat was crushed beneath his fine shapely head.

The stage was rocking down the other side of Red Gap, leaving the pines and aspens of the divide, winding and dropping toward the broad sweeping plains of the Dondrino. Old Rawhide Renner's valley. His son was wishing he had stayed away from it now. No good could come of this return.

Renner was going straight into town without stopping off at the ranch. Had to get cleaned up before he saw his father. He wondered if little old Benny Blue was still twisting broncs on Mill Iron. He looked forward to seeing Benny and Doc Seabrey, and most of all Guy Ormond. Nearly home, Renner was reluctant to face his

father, and afraid to discover what the years had done to Emily Hale. His first girl—and the only girl that mattered.

"Almost to my station, Cynthia," announced Dake Tirone, as they threaded through foothills and leveled off on the lowlands.

The next stop was for Mill Iron, and Renner wondered what this Eastern-looking man would be going there for. Dake Tirone smiled pleasantly at him, saying: "If you should want a job in this country, Martin, come out and see me at Mill Iron Ranch."

Renner masked his surprise. "Thanks, but I don't figure on hanging around long." Strange that the old man had put this dude to bossing the spread.

But this Tirone had charm, as well as poise and dignity. A polished article, Dake Tirone, with substance and strength beneath the veneer. Handsome in a refined aristocratic way, with the bearing of one born to command. Maybe Rawhide wasn't so wrong, after all.

Ahead on the north side of the westward running road, Renner could see the small log station with the Mill Iron sign and brand, and he visualized the ranch buildings on the Little Don to the north. Off in the northwest lay the gloomy tangled wastes of Sangaree Swamp, dark and sunken, mysterious and out-of-place in this country of rich grasslands. Renner remembered exploring that weird drowned area with Benny Blue a decade or more in the past.

Two men lolled on the porch of the depot, with three saddle-horses at the rack before them. Renner recognized the pair vaguely, and groped back in memory for their names. They had bullied him some after Doak was killed and Rawhide's dislike of Martin became more evident. The thin one was Cactus Prager, and the bulky man was Pat Mulcahy. They rose and waited with the same deference they accorded Rawhide Renner. Tirone had them well-trained, all right.

Dake Tirone shook hands with Renner, lifted his hat to Cynthia, and stepped out with effortless grace. He was bigger than he had appeared sitting down, well built and easy-moving. He no doubt wore a shoulder-slung pistol under that tailored coat, and could use it with speed and precision. Old Rawhide's judgment was still keen. It would be a sad mistake to underestimate this Dake Tirone.

When the coach was in motion once more, Renner became painfully aware of the perfumed proximity of the blonde lady, and of his own ragged sweaty dishevelment. She remained in the middle of the seat, and the jouncing of the vehicle threw her against Renner. The pressure of thigh and hip, arm and shoulder, soon aroused him.

"Tirone's got a big ranch out here, I take it?" he ventured.

"Yes, Dake runs the Mill Iron. The largest ranch in the valley."

Renner indicated the slumbering boy on the opposite seat. "You know this kid, ma'am?"

"I've heard about him," Cynthia smiled. "A wild youngster named Selby. Isn't it a pity to see a boy like that in such a condition?"

"Maybe I can help him some."

"You're very kind, Mr. Martin."

Renner grinned shyly. "It's not that, ma'am. I've been through it myself, you see."

The woman regarded him with frank interest, apparently not offended by his coppery beard stubble and trail-worn garb. Her eyes were intensely blue, with strange deep lights, and her mouth was lush and sensuous in that patrician face. She swayed nearer as the stage bounced, her leg and arm pressing against his, and Renner felt a strong attraction between them.

She was wholly feminine and desirable, and Renner's throat was taut and dry. Yet something about her repelled him slightly . . . Here was a woman who took what she wanted, did as she pleased, and scorned the consequences. A very dangerous lady.

Renner fumbled out tobacco sack and papers to build a smoke, and Cynthia settled back on the cushions with a faint, cool smile.

As the stage rattled into Brandvil in its rolling dust cloud, red-hazed in the lowering sun, Martin Renner observed that the town had grown and changed, taken on new aspects of civilization. But it was still raw and turbulent under the surface, he imagined.

The Concord creaked to a jolting stop, and Renner swung out to help the blonde girl down.

He was ducking back inside to rouse young Selby, when she tapped his shoulder. "The name is Cynthia Renner, Mr. Martin. Perhaps you will call on me—if you get lonely here." Her smile flashed and she turned away, leaving him stricken and staring.

The guard clambered down over the front wheel, and Martin Renner turned to him. "That's Mrs. Renner?"

"Sure, old Rawhide's second wife. Or widow, I oughta say."

Renner went cold, empty and numb. "Rawhide's dead?"

"Nigh onto two years, son." The guard spat tobacco juice. "Come on, gimme a hand with this soused-up young hellion here. And don't forget to pay your fare—if you got money. If you ain't we can make allowances for a man that had his horse shot under him."

"I've got money," Renner said dully. "How'd Rawhide die?"

"Suicide."

Renner laughed, harsh and mirthless. "Don't ever believe it, mister!"

3

SELBY GAZED around in bewilderment, as they hoisted him from the coach to the slat sidewalk. Willowy and weaving, he shook his dark head. "Where's my gun?" His voice was slow and soft. Renner handed him his hat and gun belt, and went to get his own gear from the rear luggage boot. "Come on, kid," he said to the boy.

"What've I done now?" Selby asked sadly. "You the law?"

"No, but you're coming with me to the hotel."

"You want to get drunk?" Selby asked hopefully.

"Why not?" Renner said. "But first I want to talk to you."

"Lemme carry some of that stuff." Selby took the carbine and saddlebags, and they started for the near-by hotel. "That's the way to travel by stage—unconscious," said Selby, walking pretty well now. "Meant to stay awake and look at that yella-haired gal, but the sleep probably did me more good."

In the Brock House, Renner signed for a double room and ordered a tub of hot water and a bottle of whiskey. In the room Selby went to sleep on the bed. Renner had shaved, bathed, and dressed in his last change of fresh clothing, when the boy came to and called for a drink.

After a couple of drinks Selby fell back on the bed and started snoring quietly. "Our talk'll have to wait, son," said Renner. He left a glass of whiskey on the table, hid the bottle in his saddlebags, and went out to get supper and look the old home-town over. It still seemed impossible that his father was dead.

Renner would have to see Guy Ormond, the banker and real-estate dealer, who had backed Rawhide from the start with both friendship and finances. One of the few men in the Don-drino whom Rawhide had fully trusted. . . .

But first Renner wanted to wander about and smoke his after-supper cigar and do some more thinking.

In the evening, lamps blossomed golden and flares flickered red along Front Street. The traffic of riders and wagons raised dust, and people tramped the boardwalks beneath overhangs. The hitchracks were lined with ponies, and Renner noticed new brands among the old familiar ones . . . Ranchers, cowboys and farmers from the plains mingled with prospectors, woodsmen and hunters from the hills. Renner saw freighters and drifters, gamblers and townspeople, Mormons from the north and west, and occasional Indians and breeds.

Here and there Renner saw folk he knew, but passed unrecognized himself. He had grown

and changed considerably in seven years, and Brandvil had forgotten the existence of Rawhide Renner's no-account son. Which was just as well, for his purposes.

The blonde Cynthia must have been involved in Rawhide's death. She had married him for his money, of course, and she'd probably inherited everything. She and Dake Tirone were no doubt working together.

There were others to be considered and investigated, however. A man as powerful and ruthless as Rawhide Renner invariably made a lot of enemies. Sheriff Sullers, for instance, had always stood against Rawhide—so far as he dared. And Sullers was no more honest than most ambitious politicians.

There was Black Jack Herne, who controlled the gambling and dancehall interests in Brandvil. He operated the Crystal Castle on the western outskirts, and employed professional gunfighters for protection. Herne had hated Rawhide, but his fear had been stronger than his hatred in the old days. Herne might have grown bolder though, as Rawhide aged. He would bear observation, at any rate.

And there were others, many of them. Ranchers like Ivy Wingate of the Running W and Detwiler of Doubloon. Business men like Lute Kemper and Clyde Voorhees in town. The enemies of Rawhide Renner were legion, yet it was difficult for Martin to picture any of them killing him—even from ambush. And making it appear so much like suicide, that even Guy Ormond and Doc Seabrey were convinced.

Martin Renner meant to run down the one, or ones, who had put his old man under. It gave him an objective, shaped and pointed his existence toward a definite goal. And that's what he needed . . . At sixteen he hadn't been man enough to avenge his brother Doak, but ten years later he was ready to exact payment for the death of his father. *I never did anything for you in life, Dad. You wouldn't let me. The least I can do now is get the man, or the men, who killed you.*

Renner walked back toward the central square, in which freight wagons, buckboards and buggies were ranked about the large stone horse trough. The old Alhambra was booming as usual, and he'd drop in later for a drink. Renner thought of Spanish, and wondered how he was going to get himself a horse. He'd expected to take his pick from the Mill Iron stable, but that was out now. . . . He hoped young Selby was still sleeping in the hotel room.

Turning into the driveway beside the Brock House, Renner strolled back to the yard and corals, the barn and sheds of the livery. It was here that Wolf Leiken had shot Doak, and standing in this spot he had seen in so many haunted dreams and memories, Martin Renner felt none

of the old horror and grief, nothing but a vacant numbness.

Then, leaning on the rails and watching the moon rise above the high Taloncillo ramparts in the east, he was lonelier than he had ever been in any of the faraway and foreign places.

4

IN THE Alhambra Saloon, Renner nursed a drink at the long bar and listened to the babble of voices in the smoky air. Talk of cattle and horses, a gold strike in the Caprocks to the west, rustling in the Sandstone Hills on the south and the northern plateaus, the girls at Herne's Crystal Castle, the coming of a railroad line. Men waxed bitter about the Panic of 1873, which was still felt throughout the nation, and the corruption of the Grant administration in Washington. There was mention of Carnegie Steel and Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company in the East, and discussion concerning the new Colt .45's and Winchester .44-40's. . . . Renner listened in vain for some reference to Mill Iron, Dake Tirone and Cynthia Renner.

He was surprised to see little Benny Blue in a white apron, working behind the bar some distance away. He wondered what had converted Benny from a bronc-peeler to a bartender, until he noticed the pronounced limp. Gray-haired, wizened, jut-jawed Benny had been a casual ally and advisor to Mart Renner in boyhood, his perpetual gargoyle scowl masking a philosopher's mind and a kind, generous nature. Now Benny squinted thoughtfully at Renner a couple of times, without any sign of recognition, yet Mart felt that the wry tough little man knew him at once.

Laughter erupted in midroom, and the sounds of a scuffling commotion. A customer said: "Them Mill Iron gunnies plaguin' that poor drunk kid again." Another chimed in: "Yeah, they oughta have a gun bent over their heads." And a third voice: "If young Selby was sober he'd take care of 'em, and don't forget it."

Renner wheeled and saw Selby, far gone in drink, crowded between the two Mill Iron hands. Pat Mulcahy, broad and red-faced, shouldered the boy to one side. Cactus Prager, wiry and wicked-eyed, caught Selby and shoved him back at Mulcahy.

Renner might have been tempted to let the kid take his medicine, but he didn't like those Mill Iron men, or the vicious way they were abusing the boy. As much as Renner disliked becoming conspicuous at this time, he knew he couldn't stay out of this unless they turned Selby loose or somebody else pried them off the kid.

Selby swung wildly at Mulcahy, and the

squat man slugged him in the face. Reeling backward the boy groped for his holster. Prager clipped him across the back of the neck, and Mulcahy clubbed him with a brutal fist, dropping Selby in the dirty sawdust. Prager was ready to give him the boot, when Martin Renner stepped out and spoke with quiet intensity:

"That's far enough. Leave the kid alone!"

They whirled toward him, and Cactus Prager said, with a down-turned sneer baring his buck teeth: "Who the hell's this honyonker?" And Pat Mulcahy snarled: "What you hornin' in for, brother? You want some of the same?"

"Two grown men on a drunken kid," Renner said, in mild reproach.

Prager grinned. "You're growed and sober. Deal yourself in."

"Just leave the boy alone."

Mulcahy laughed. "You got a big mouth. Back it up with that gun."

"I don't want any gunplay," said Renner.

"Shut up, then, and breeze," Prager said, kicking at Selby's ribs.

Renner lunged forward and lashed out at Mulcahy, the nearest, landing solidly and lifting the stocky man backward across chairs and a table. Patrons sprang clear and Mulcahy went down with a splintering crash of woodwork and glassware.

Prager's gun was half-drawn when Renner spun and struck with his left, smashing him back against the wall. Crumpled and drooping there, Prager was still trying to draw as Renner's right ripped into his narrow features. Prager's head bounced off the planks with a crunching thud, and he pitched forward under a table, which overturned spilling bottles and glasses.

A warning shout brought Renner around to face Mulcahy, who was coming in a bull-like rush. Renner hit him, left and right, jarring the man to a stunned standstill. Renner let go another left, feeling the impact to his shoulder, and Mulcahy landed on his back in the wreckage. Legs in the air he slid against the foot of the bar, upsetting a brass cuspidor there.

Swinging back toward the entrance, Renner saw Cactus Prager crawling out of the debris with a jagged broken bottle in his grasp. Moving in fast Martin hooked Prager with a savage left, and flung him rolling to the baseboard. Dropping the bottleneck Prager scrambled onto all fours and grabbed at his gun, but Mart Renner drove his foot into that bloody face with crushing force. Neck snapped and skull bounced against the wall, and Prager collapsed into a slack sprawl.

Pat Mulcahy was coming up again, as Renner swiveled in that direction, and this time there was a Colt in Pat's huge paw. Frozen in his tracks, too late to draw, Renner watched Mulcahy come crouching onward like some squat

beast, blood streaming down his heavy features.

"I'm goin' to shoot the guts outa you, brother!" Mulcahy panted.

A hushed tension filled the room, until a rasping voice broke it: "You ain't doin' nothin' of the kind, Pat. Leather that iron before I let go with both barrels!" It was Benny Blue, with a sawed-off shotgun leveled across the counter.

Pat Mulcahy turned slowly and gazed into the twin muzzles. Swearing, he holstered his six-gun. "You're crazy, Benny, throwing down on Mill Iron. You know that ain't healthy."

"Mill Iron or nobody else is doin' murder in here," Benny Blue told him. "Get out, Pat, and drag Cactus along with you."

Cactus Prager got up slowly, holding onto his crimsoned dripping jaw. "You're goin' to be—plenty sorry, Benny. And you too—big boy."

"Why, I'm sorry right now," Renner said gravely, blinking sweat from his eyes and massaging his sore knuckles.

"Get goin', you two. Move on out." Benny waved his scattergun, and the Mill Iron pair blundered groggily out through the batwings.

Renner bent and lifted Selby, smelling the reek of whiskey and sweat and trampled sawdust. Benny Blue put down the shotgun, took off his apron, and came out from behind the bar. "Upstairs to my room. I'm knockin' off and I'll show you the way."

In the room at the rear of the second-floor corridor, Renner deposited Selby on the bed and held out his hand to the small wrinkled bartender. "Obliged, Benny. Hope it don't get you in trouble."

Blue gripped his hand and snorted. "Trouble's bread-and-butter to me, boy. Thought you looked familiar. Second glance and I knew you was Marty Renner. Welcome back, son. You've growed up considerable. Too bad old Rawhide couldn't of seen you go down there tonight."

"You look the same, Benny," said Renner. "Sunny smile and all."

"Hell, I'm all crippled up and old enough to die, Mart." He scowled even more ferociously. "You heard about your dad?"

"Not much. Just that he's dead. And they called it suicide."

"Ain't that somethin'? Suicide! An old grizzly bear like Rawhide!" Cursing, Benny indicated a whiskey bottle on the stand, poured water from a pitcher into a washbowl, and set to bathing young Selby's face. "This kid's had a bad run lately. Folks owned a little spread up on the north tablelands. Somebody shot the old nan, run off the stock, and the mother died soon after. Selby's been mostly drunk ever since."

"Lots of rustling here, Benny?"

"Some. The small spreads suffer most. I figure the big ones are doin' it, but they claim it's a Mormon gang from outside."

Martin Renner took a drink and lit a cigar. "Who got my dad, Benny?"

Blue shook his almost-white head, his scarred leathery face solemn. "A lot of theories. Too many for me. Offhand I'd guess Black Jack Herne hired it done. He never forgave Rawhide for havin' that red-light district closed and all them cribs torn down."

"What about the young widow—and Dake Tirone?"

"I don't know, son. They seem to be on the level. Rawhide had Tirone runnin' Mill Iron two-three years before he died. Thought a lot of Dake. And the gal—well, there's always a lot of talk when a pretty young woman marries an older man. But she was nice to Rawhide, made him a real good wife."

"Where'd they find him?"

Benny paused in his ministrations for a gulp of whiskey. "Out between Sangaree Swamp and the Little Don Crossing. Dead on the ground, his gun beside him, horse near. One shot fired from the gun, close enough to burn his shirt."

"It really looked like suicide then?"

"Sure—but it wasn't. Here's somethin' most people don't know. Rawhide wasn't killed with his own forty-four. That was fired after, at close range, into the bullet hole that done the job. Rawhide was killed at long range with a rifle."

"You're sure about that, Ben?"

"Doc Seabrey told me, Mart."

"Couldn't you do anything about it?"

Benny gestured disgustedly. "What can you do with a sheriff like Abe Sullers? Doc and me tried to get a U.S. marshal, but he ain't showed yet."

"You think it was a buffalo gun? One of those old Sharps like Rawhide had?" Renner smiled thinly. "This afternoon in Red Gap I had a horse killed under me. It sounded like, and the hole looked like, one of those big-bore Sharps."

"Anybody know you was comin' home, Marty?"

"Not that I know of, Benny. You got any leads for me?"

Benny dipped the towel and went on sponging Selby's face. "I think old Sam Derry knows somethin', but he's too scared to talk. You remember old Sam, the gunsmith?"

Renner nodded. "I'll try him anyway."

"Be careful, boy. Somebody must of heard you was on your way home. Brandvil ain't apt to be a healthy town for you, Mart."

"Or some other folks either," Martin Renner said quietly.

"Don't go chargin' the Castle all by yourself now. Most likely you've learned to handle a gun pretty good while you been skyhootin' round the country, but some odds are too big for any man to buck alone."

"I might get out there later, Ben. A peaceful visit."

"The kid here's comin' around," Benny Blue said. "Maybe we'll see you in that fancy sink-hole of sin and iniquity later in the evenin'."

5

RENNER TURNED south and walked toward the Dondrino River, the night sounds of Front Street fading behind him. Hoofs chopped the soft dirt, and wheels turned on groaning axles. Children shouted at play and a mother called urgently for her young ones. Dogs started barking somewhere, and coyotes answered in the distance. Renner had walked these streets with Emily Hale, and seen beauty in everything about them. Now it was just another shabby, barren, frontier settlement. The magic was gone with the years. He walked alone, feeling old and dull, with a nameless pain and hunger turning inside him.

The Hale house was before him, its windows warm amber rectangles in the darkness, and Martin Renner hesitated in front of the homelike cottage. No, he had too much to do. Most of it with a gun, all of it bad. . . .

Renner went on with resolute strides. He had deserted her, and she wouldn't care to see him. It would only open old wounds. He walked on toward the river, a tall, lonely figure moving with the stilted grace of a rider, the sheathed .44 Colt sagging on his right thigh.

Old Sam Derry occupied bachelor quarters behind his gun shop, an ancient log-and-frame structure near the river bluff. In boyhood Renner had spent many pleasant hours here, fascinated by guns even though slow in learning to use them, according to the standards of his father.

Sam opened the back door narrowly and peered out into the night. He had changed, aged shockingly. Lamplight varnished his bald head, and fear made a caricature of his withered features and drooping jowls. "Who is it?" he demanded fretfully. "Shop's closed!"

"Got to see you a minute, Sam," said Renner. "You know me. Martin Renner—Rawhide's son."

"No, *no!*" The old man tried to slam the door, but Renner inserted his boot and forced it open, until he was inside with Sam Derry faltering in retreat before him.

"Why'd you come back here?" wailed the gunsmith. "Anybody see you coming here?" This town's gone stinking rotten. You won't last overnight here, Martin."

"Take it easy, Sam. You and Rawhide were always close. What can you tell me about his

death? You know all the guns in the Dondrino. Who's got an old Sharps fifty-six or -eight?"

"Ain't none of 'em left. Don't use 'em since the buffalo went and the repeaters come in." Sam Derry sank into a homemade barrel chair, and gestured feebly for Renner to take the leather one. "Don't know a thing about Rawhide's death. Not a single solitary thing." The room smelled of age and fear and mold. Recalling the clean oiled-steel odor of the shop out front, the keen eyes and deft fingers of a younger Sam Derry, Renner was wistful and saddened.

"Think hard, Sam. Someone's still using a buffalo gun around here."

"Your father had a fifty-six. Fine old weapon. But they all got repeaters nowadays. Go on away, Martin, and let an old man get his sleep—if sleep'll come."

Renner studied the cigarette he was shaping. "You've got something on your mind, Sam. Spill it and you'll rest easier. Who killed Rawhide?"

"They claim he killed himself. He's in his grave, boy. You can't raise the dead. Get out and leave me be."

"Was it Black Jack Herne?"

"How in tarnation would I know? Please get out of here, Martin. Out of town and the whole Dondrino, if you got the brains you was born with."

"All right, Sam," said Renner gently. "Sorry if I upset you, but don't worry too much."

"Worry?" Sam sighed and shook his bald head. "If things was different, son . . . I—I miss Rawhide as much as anybody. A great man. They don't make no more like him . . . But that don't keep a man alive. You better go, Marty. I'm old and sick and I want to be alone."

"You'll get better, Sam." Renner rose with a kindly smile. "There's going to be some changes here."

"They're too many for you son." Sam Derry stood up shakily. "You'll end up like Rawhide did, if you try to buck 'em . . . Watch yourself, Mart. Look for a gun at every corner."

"Don't be afraid any more. Good night, Sam."

"They'll be after you, when they hear you're back. God help you, boy." He shut and bolted the door, as soon as Renner was outside.

The moon sailed high and serene over the Taloncillo Mountains, gilding the lofty peaks and domes, and the cottonwoods and willows glistened in the moonbeams along the silvered Dondrino. Beyond the river deep in the south rolled the Sandstone Hills, and far off to the west reared the serrated barrier of the Caprock Range. The fragrance of new grass and leaves and sage came to Renner, as he sauntered back toward the center of the community, and Cherokee roses bloomed in some of the dooryards.

Poor old Sam was scared almost witless. He

must know who owned the Sharps that had killed Rawhide—and Martin's horse. It was dangerous knowledge to possess, and had turned Sam Derry's existence into a perpetual nightmare. The only way Renner could protect the old-timer was to run down the killers. He'd start with Black Jack Herne and his bodyguards.

The close hot suction of lead seared past Renner's head, as flame speared blindingly from an alley across the street to the right. The report blasted the stillness and echoed among the buildings. Pivoting and drawing with smooth instinctive speed, Renner threw a shot at the fading muzzle flash.

Boots crunched in rapid flight, as Renner crossed to the mouth of that dark passage. The man kept running and Renner took after him, gun in hand. But when he cleared the rear corner of the alley, the untidy back lots were empty and silent. There was little sense in plunging into that littered black labyrinth of sheds, outhouses, rubbish heaps, and fences.

Swearing softly and replacing his spent shell, Renner returned to the street and paced on toward the garish glow of the business section. Heads popped from doors and windows, and hoarse voices called questioningly from house to house, but Renner ignored them and strode on his way.

This was what he had to expect then. Sam Derry's prophecy about his not lasting overnight might come true. He couldn't fight something he couldn't see. It left Renner with a baffled helpless sensation, mixed with cold hard anger.

A block from Front, a neat, trim, dark-clothed man stepped into Renner's path, and Mart's Colt was half-drawn again before he recognized Abel Sullers, the sheriff.

"What's all the shooting about?" the lawman asked coolly, white teeth showing beneath his black mustache.

"Somebody took a shot at me, and I returned the favor," Renner said.

"You seem to have brought a lot of trouble to town with you," Sullers said. "What's your name, mister? Martin? . . . You mean Martin Renner, don't you?"

"All right, Abe. I guess you've got me tagged."

"If you don't want to be recognized you ought to keep out of saloon fights—and shooting scrapes."

A brisk stomp of boots interrupted, and they turned to watch the approach of a tall, straight man in a frock coat and striped trousers. Guy Ormond, as handsome and distinguished as ever, with his high gray head and well-trimmed gray beard.

"What's going on here, Abel?" he asked jovially. "Did I hear gunplay, or was it just some drunk letting off steam?" Then he regis-

tered surprise and delight, as he recognized Renner. "Why, Marty! How are you, my boy? Were you mixed up in that shooting?"

"Hello, Guy," said Renner, shaking hands with him. "Somebody tried to pot me from an alley, and Abe wants to jail me for it."

Guy Ormond laughed heartily and clapped Renner on the shoulder. "A great pleasure to see you, Marty. Just taking my evening constitutional . . . Come on back to the office, Martin. I have something better than the local saloons serve. Perhaps you'll join us in a drink, Abel?"

"No thanks, Guy," said Sullers. "I'll leave Mart in your hands."

"I'll take care of the young man," Ormond assured the sheriff.

"All right, Guy," muttered Sullers. "But I still think he ought to get out of town—while he can." He slanted across the street, and the other two made for the brick bank-building near the square.

"Wonderful to see you after all these years, Marty," said Ormond. "You've grown big and tall, filled out and developed remarkably. Can't tell you how pleased I was when I heard you were here."

"Didn't think anybody had spotted me except Benny Blue."

"Oh yes, you were recognized by several citizens." Ormond unlocked his private entrance at the rear of the bank, and lighted a desk lamp. "Nothing's the same since Rawhide went, Martin. I've been a very lonely man." He got out bottle and glasses, and poured the drinks.

Neither Guy Ormond nor this elegant office showed the ravages of time, yet Renner sensed some subtle change in the man. Ormond was every inch the aristocrat, but there was warmth, understanding and kindness in him too. The slight restraint between them was natural after a long separation. Ormond inquired about his travels, and Renner replied with brief simplicity.

"Nothing I'd like better, Martin, than to have you settle down here," Guy Ormond said, in his grave, well-modulated voice. "But I'm afraid the sheriff is right, to a certain extent. Your father had many enemies, who were envious of his power and success. Apparently they're transferring their hatred to you, which means that your life isn't safe in Brandvil."

"Don't intend to stay long," Renner said. "But there's a few things I want to find out."

"Naturally, my boy," agreed Ormond. "About the will, now. Your father cut you out when you ran away from home. You no doubt expected as much?" He went on before Renner could answer. "Cynthia Renner is a generous lady, however, and from the first she has wanted to grant you a fair settlement. Providing you could be located."

"She don't have to."

"She is determined to, Martin, and it's only fair and just. It will give you enough capital to start a business, or to live and travel about in comfort."

"We'll see about that later, Guy," said Renner.

"As you wish, my boy. I merely wanted to make it clear that you're not being left penniless. What do you propose to do first?"

"Find out who murdered my father," Renner said bluntly.

Guy Ormond looked shocked. "You think it was murder then? I've had that feeling myself, at times, but all the evidence indicated suicide."

"I know he didn't kill himself, Guy."

"Then revenge *was* the motive behind your return?"

Renner smiled somberly. "Not quite. I thought Rawhide was alive, until I got to Brandvil."

"Ah, I see." Ormond's austere, bearded countenance mirrored some of the same incredulity that Sullers had shown. "It won't help Rawhide to throw your own life away, Martin. I can't honestly support any lawless enterprise on your part, either."

"You don't have to, Guy. I'm doing it on my own."

Ormond inclined his noble gray head in sorrow. "Regrettable, my boy." Then he smiled with all his charm and cheer. "We may as well have another drink."

"Got to be going, Guy. A lot of things to do, before too many folks find out I'm here."

"I trust you won't be too rash, Martin. Anything I can do now? Have you enough money?"

Renner grinned ruefully. "You might lend me fifty, Guy."

Ormond counted out five tens from his wallet. "Will that be enough, Marty? I can advance you any amount within reason. Cynthia will be generous in her settlement, I'm sure."

"This is all I need right now," Renner said. "Thanks for everything, Guy. And I'll see you tomorrow—if all goes well."

Ormond rose with him. "Be careful, son. You're going against tremendous odds, you know."

Renner held out his hand. "I got used to being on the short end these last seven years, Guy."

Outside Renner realized how bone-tired he was, and a feeling of disappointment spread through his weariness. Everyone thought he had come back to muscle into Rawhide's fortune, and everybody but Benny Blue wanted to get him out of town. Even Guy Ormond.

He met Benny Blue limping out of the Brock House, and Benny said: "Just put the

kid to bed in your room, Mart. He'll be all right tomorrow, but he ain't fit for anything but slumber tonight."

"Neither am I, Benny," said Renner, yawning.

"You get anything from old Sam?"

"No, he's scared to death. But I got shot at again, after leaving his place."

Benny Blue grunted and spat tobacco juice. "Have to get used to that, Mart. You're going to get greeted mostly by guns here."

6

THE Crystal Castle was a large two-story frame building at the western edge of Brandvil. The exterior, bare and ugly, made the name seem pretentious, but the interior was lavish for a frontier honkytonk. An elaborate bar, a gambling room and a dance hall took up the ground floor, with a stage at the opposite end from the bar. Upstairs were living quarters for Black Jack Herne and his gunmen, the percentage girls and other employees, and rooms for private parties.

Rawhide Renner had tried to put Herne out of business, but the most he could accomplish was wiping out the blatant evil of the cribs that Black Jack had operated in a two-acre section on the perimeter of town. Since then the vice of the valley had centered around this notorious emporium of pleasure. Enormous crystal chandeliers appeared to float on shifting seas of blue smoke. Backbar and wall mirrors reflected the merriment, and polished brass fixtures gleamed under the lights.

Despite its expensive trappings, the Castle catered to clients from all levels. There were drinks and games and girls that the poorest-paid cowhands could afford, and there were others which taxed the means of the most prosperous ranchers, freighters, merchants and gamblers. Jack Herne stayed behind the scenes for the most part, but housemen were everywhere about the premises. Lookouts on high stools watched over the gambling tables, with shotguns across their knees. Men like Elgart and Garay and Webley, packing two pistols, circulated around the bar-room and dance floor. An outsider didn't have a chance here.

Except for her crimson gown, low cut on a firm white bosom, the woman in a doorway off the dance floor did not look as if she belonged in this setting. Black hair with a natural wave framed a fine face, in which strength and delicacy were blended. The brown eyes, set at a slight exotic slant above prominent cheekbones, were flecked with golden lights. Her nose was straight and proud, and her mouth was wide and full

above the clean-cut chin. There was grace in the flowing curves of her figure, with a ripe feminine depth for all of her slenderness.

Martin Renner was back in Brandvil, and she didn't know whether to be glad or sorry. He'd grown big and tough, they said, but no one man was big and tough enough to face all the evil elements in the Dondrino.

She remembered Martin as a nice, lanky boy with coppery-brown hair and a sweet shy smile. It was hard to picture that quiet, pleasant boy turned into a barroom brawler and gun-fighter. But wasn't it equally hard to believe that she, Emily Hale, had become a percentage girl in a place like this?

Seven years since Martin had gone away, and for a while she'd really thought she was dying with a broken heart. Sometimes now she wished she had . . . Instead Tom Hilliard had come along and courted her, and Emily had married him two years ago—before she realized that Hilliard was a gay, charming, but irresponsible rakehell who worked for Black Jack Herne as a hired gunhand.

Six months after the wedding, Tom Hilliard had been shot to death on some mysterious mission for Herne. Emily had gone home to her parents, but everything was changed and she couldn't stay there. For the past year she had been working at the Castle, a disgrace to the family. But Emily could hold her head up, if her folks could not. She wasn't like the other girls here, regardless of what people thought. Jack Herne had made special provisions for Emily. Her duties were restricted to dancing and nothing else.

Even so, Emily hated to have Martin Renner find her in this place. And he'd be coming out here, sooner or later. She had looked for him last night.

Emily always doubted that Rawhide Renner had taken his own life. She suspected that he'd been murdered, and that Herne and his crew were mixed up in it. At odd moments she was inclined to think Hilliard had been killed by Herne's men, and that was why Black Jack treated her so kindly. She'd probably never learn the facts about Tom Hilliard's death, but Marty Renner would do everything in his power to uncover the truth concerning the death of his father. Martin would be coming to the Castle for that purpose, and he'd be in great danger.

They'd been little more than children when they fell in love, but there had been nothing shallow and adolescent about it. Martin might scarcely remember her, but she'd never forget him. The first, the dearest, and the best . . . They had both wanted marriage, until Marty had suddenly run away. Left her and his Mill Iron heritage, and never once written in all those years.

Maybe it was just a kid's affair to him, Emily thought. But not to me. It went deep, it was everything . . . I didn't have a thing to give poor Tom Hilliard. Tom really got cheated—and then killed.

And she still loved Renner and nothing else mattered.

7

DRINK IN HAND, Renner turned from the bar and surveyed the garish splendour of the Crystal Castle. Lamplight streamed through sparkling pendants, reflected from myriad mirrors, and touched brass fixtures with golden fire. It was too flashy and loud and swarming with humanity for Renner's liking. The gayety and laughter had a false forced note. He felt oppressed, almost smothered, in this place.

It would have been easy to pick out Herne's gunhands, even if Benny hadn't refreshed his memory. But big Garay, lanky Elgart and the small Webley seemed wholly unaware of Renner's presence. Nobody appeared to recognize him, yet Martin was uncomfortably aware of eyes fixed on his every movement. Possibly he was being watched through peepholes in the walls. If Renner's identity was known, death hovered at his shoulder. But he doubted if Herne wanted him killed openly in public. At least not until Jack was certain Renner was after him.

Wandering casually about, Renner came face-to-face with one after another of the gunmen, but none of them paid the slightest attention to him. He was just another anonymous sucker, come to pour money into the overflowing cash drawers of Black Jack Herne.

Back at the bar, Renner bought a bottle of Valley Tan and carried it with two glasses to a small empty table in an obscure corner. Maybe he could learn something from talking to one of these women. He had felt the glances of several girls on him, and caught a spark of interest in them. Renner knew he attracted some women, and left others cold and indifferent. Except with Emily Hale, it hadn't mattered much, one way or the other.

The first two girls who approached were obviously too silly and shallow to be of any use, and Renner sent them away. . . . An interval elapsed before a shadow fell across the table, and Renner looked up.

Emily was standing there—quite calm and composed.

He rose quickly, the shock plain on his bronzed features, and drew her down into the chair beside his. "Emily! What are you doing *here*?"

"A girl has to live, Martin," she said lightly.

"What's wrong with living at home?"

"Not so welcome there any more. You might as well know it all. I made an unfortunate marriage. My husband died soon afterward. I found I couldn't live with my folks any longer."

"Who was he, Em?" asked Renner.

"Nobody you knew, Marty. Tom Hilliard, up from New Mexico. He worked for Herne—and was killed on the job."

Renner stared at her, turning his rusty cropped head from side to side, his face bleak and desolate.

Emily laughed softly. "It's not as bad as that, Martin. He wasn't a bad boy. Just a little wild and crazy—and weak. And I don't do anything here but dance."

"That's enough, isn't it?"

"It is," she agreed evenly. "But I want you to know I don't work upstairs. And I don't live here. I have a cabin of my own, down by the river."

Renner smiled ruefully. "I've got no right to question you anyway, Emily. Forgive me."

"You have the right—if you want it, Marty. And I'm not ashamed of anything. Except marrying so unwisely. But I—I was lost after you left, Martin. I didn't know what to do."

"I've been lost too, Em," said Renner. "Will you have a drink?" She nodded and he poured one. Emily had bloomed into full ripe womanhood, with an easy grace of manner. There was sadness and loneliness and courage in her, and it made her the more intriguing. "You look better than ever, Emily."

"We've both changed," she murmured. "Seven years is a long time."

It rankled to think of her married to another, and to see her employed, however innocently, in a palace of pleasure like this. But Renner had only himself to blame. He was the one who had broken off, abandoned her without any explanation. Because he himself could not understand the compulsion that drove him out of the Dondrino Valley.

"Don't these gunsharps of Herne's know who I am?" Renner asked.

"They know you, Mart. But they don't want any trouble with you."

His smile was thin and fleeting. "You think they had anything to do with my father's death?"

"You don't believe it was suicide, Marty?"

"I know damn well it wasn't. And so do you, Em."

Emily inclined her dark head. "I've had that feeling, Martin. But I don't really know anything about it."

"Nobody does," Renner said. "But I'm going to find out. How do I get to see Herne?"

Alarm widened her brown eyes. "Don't try to see him. It won't do any good. You can't fight his whole crew, Marty."

"Got to start somewhere," said Renner. "What do you think of Rawhide's lovely widow and the slick Dake Tirone? Any tie-up between them and Jack Herne?"

Emily was mildly astonished. "Never seen any sign of it, Martin. They're very close to Guy Ormond, and Guy despises Herne—as much as your dad did."

Renner sighed. "I know, Em. But I've got to figure every angle." He glanced at the bobbing maelstrom of the dance floor. Big Mule Garay was signaling to Emily, disregarding Renner entirely. "You're being summoned, Em."

Emily looked up with a grimace. "Excuse me a minute, Marty. I do this to keep peace in the outfit. Don't go away. I'll be right back." She walked over into the formal embrace of the smiling giant, who whirled her off with surprising finesse. Renner watched them in disgust. The end of a beautiful young love, he thought bitterly. Your girl married to a cheap gunny, and winding up in this gilded sink-hole.

Throwing down a drink, Renner searched for Benny and Selby, but something must have delayed them in town. He dallied over another drink, but neither Emily nor Garay made a reappearance. He decided to go back into the center and see if Benny Blue and Selby were in trouble.

Pushing out through tall, ornate swing-doors, Renner hesitated in the shadows to breathe in the fresh night air.

Then as he walked away briskly, furtive sounds from the rear brought him wheeling about, but already a gun barrel was swishing at his head. He ducked and dodged, too late to avoid the shocking impact. His brain exploded in a white-hot flash, his legs melted and the ground rushed up at him. He felt gravel under his cheek, grit against his teeth, and he rolled over and away, glimpsing three dark forms closing in. Elgart and Garay and Webley. They knew him all right.

Heavy boots lashed into his body with splintering force, driving the breath from his lungs. Renner grappled at the swinging legs and hooked onto one, heaving the man off balance and down. Flinging himself backward in the dirt, Renner rolled and came up with gun drawn, but they were all over him before he could use it. Fists smashed his face, and something wrenched the Colt from his hand. Renner struck back and landed a few, but he was still stunned from the gunwhipping and most of his blows were smothered.

With methodical speed and precision the three men worked on him, pouring punches from all sides, slashing his face and head, ripping low and deep into his abdomen. A jolt in the throat left Renner gagging, retching and sick. A smash in the groin from Spider Webley dou-

bled Renner over, and an uppercut by Pine Elgart lifted him erect again. Then Mule Garay unleashed a crusher that all but tore Renner's head off. The earth slammed his skull and spine, and all consciousness left him.

They went on working him over with boots and fists, but Martin Renner was mercifully oblivious to this final punishment.

8

SUNLIGHT STREAMED through windowpanes and stabbed agonizingly into bruised eyelids and aching eyeballs. The bed was luxuriously soft, but scarcely enough so for Renner's racked body. He groaned and wondered where he was. Carefully he moved his arms and legs, touched his ribs and hips. He hurt all over, but his limbs functioned. Didn't seem to be any broken bones. His eyes wouldn't open very wide, and his face felt swollen and stiff. Behind lacerated lips his teeth were intact, but they had done quite a job on him. He wondered why they hadn't finished it.

It was a bright, cheerful, thoroughly feminine room, with a glittering array of dainty bottles on the hand-made dressing table. He hadn't expected to wake up at all, and certainly not in a scented bower like this.

The sunshine had an afternoon look, and through an open window he saw the spring greenery of cottonwoods, salt cedars and willows. He remembered a vague nightmare interlude, in which people fussed over him while he seemed suspended between life and death. Faces had swum in a steaming haze above him. Emily, Benny Blue, young Selby, and Doc Seabrey . . . But it was difficult to differentiate between reality and fantasy, for he had seen others with equal clarity. Faces of the dead. Rawhide and Doak and Glenway had been there, as real as the rest . . . But the sharpest reality had been the pain.

Emily appeared in the doorway, slim and fresh in a gingham dress, looking younger and lovelier than she had in the crimson satin. "You feeling better, Martin? Your eyes are clearer—what I can see of them."

"How'd I get here, Em?" He accepted and drank a glass of water.

"Young Selby and Benny Blue brought you. They came along in time."

"Where'd you go last night?"

"Garay dragged me into a private dining room to question me, and left me locked in there. One of the girls let me out, and I came home with Ben and Selby."

"Does Herne know I'm here?"

"Nobody knows it, except your friends and Doc Seabrey."

"Where's Benny and the kid?"

"In town," Emily said. "They'll be out this evening."

Renner reached out a hand, and Emily clasped it in hers. "How could you marry anybody else, Em?"

"How could you run off and leave me without a word, Martin?" Her smile was sad and wistful.

"I don't know, Em. Never did and never will."

She leaned over and kissed him lightly on the forehead. "Well, you're back now. If I can keep you alive here."

Renner sat up in the bed. "Time I was up and around. Did they think a beating would stop me?"

"They'll use guns next time."

"That's the way I want it," Renner said softly.

Later, alone in the room with a tub of steaming water, soap and towels, Renner paced about to limber stiffened joints and bruised muscles, and then soaked his battered frame in the soothing bath. After an interval of toweling and cooling off, he dressed in the crisp clean clothes Emily had washed and ironed for him. Renner felt wonderfully restored, almost normal again, and in the mirror his welted face didn't look as bad as he had anticipated.

This was the cabin Emily had lived in with Tom Hilliard, out near the Dondrino at the southwestern edge of the settlement. Could he ever be contented with a woman who had been married to another man, even though he had been first with her?

Emily regarded him with approval, as he emerged into the pleasant living room. "You look like a new man, Martin. A very handsome man."

"I almost feel like one. New, not handsome."

"Benny and Selby are coming out to supper."

"It's nice here, Emily," said Renner. "But I shouldn't have taken your bed."

"I don't mind the couch, Marty. I used to sleep there—most of the time."

Renner stepped forward and she came into his arms, fitting as well as ever, full-bodied and firmly soft against him, her arms gripping and her dark head tilting back. He lowered his mouth against the red ripeness of hers. The years melted away between them, and it was as it had been—or almost so. They were both back where they belonged, and for Renner it seemed for the first time that he had really come home.

They walked onto the porch overlooking the wooded bluff of the river. Eastward along the stream Renner saw a smudge of smoke staining the air above the sprawling village. "What's

that, Em?" he asked, a cold premonition within him.

"Sam Derry's place burned before sun-up. It's been smoking all day. Poor old Sam never got out of it."

"Another murder," Renner said, chilled and rigid, with a sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach. "One I'm to blame for—in a way." He told her about visiting the gunsmith. "Now they've killed old Sam because they thought he'd talked to me. Or would talk in time."

"About what, Martin?"

"About the gun that killed my father, Em," said Renner. He walked away from her and the cabin, a flare of fury scorching away his soreness. That did it. He had to get those killers—and fast. Before Emily and Ben and Selby suffered and died, for being on his side.

The sun was sinking toward the jagged Caprocks on the western horizon. The Taloncillos were piled high in the east, and beyond them was the Colorado River, slanting across the southeast corner of Utah. To the north sandstone cliffs rose, step after step, to the vast tablelands that swept all the way to the Uinta Mountains, and in the northwest towered the magnificent crests of the Wasatch Range. A land of fabulous colors and sweeping distances, so farflung that this great valley was lost in the immensity of it. A country Martin Renner knew and loved, as his father had before him.

Renner recalled long riding trips with Emily, west to the fantastic erosion spires, columns and turrets of blazing Bryce Canyon. Southeast to the remote wilderness of the San Juan River area, with its picturesque natural arches and sandstone bridges. And northward on the lofty broken plateaus, between the Wasatches and the Green River. Once, with Rawhide and Doak, he had gone as far as Great Salt Lake and the desert in northwestern Utah.

Lengthening shadows darkened from gray to blue, lavender to purple, and the sun went down behind the Caprocks, setting fire to all the clouds in the western sky.

It was dusk when Renner heard hoofs clopping nearer, and he went into the delicious odors of Emily's kitchen to buckle on the gun that the boys had retrieved for him last night. Waiting at the corner of the cabin, he saw Benny Blue and Selby riding in with a third horse on lead, and Renner's heart went up at the sight of them. They stepped down and tied the broncs to the rail, and Renner saw that Selby had fully recovered from his drunken spree. The kid was clear-eyed, fresh-faced and smiling with boyish charm.

Benny Blue scowled at Renner. "You look better'n I expected. The pot's boilin' in Brandvil. You better lay low, Mart. I'm gettin' tired of savin' your life."

"They got Sam Derry?"

"It was set all right," Benny said. "Soaked in kerosene. Nothin' much left of old Sam."

"Brought you these, Mart." Young Selby handed over his spurs and the spare holstered gun from the saddlebags.

"Thanks, Selby," said Renner. "And thanks to both of you for last night." He removed his shell belt, slipped the sheathed Colt onto the left side, and laid belt and spurs on a porch chair.

"We was a little late, Mart," drawled Selby. "They ducked inside when we cut down on them. Couldn't get a clear shot at 'em."

"Supper's ready, boys," called Emily, from the doorway.

"So am I, Em," said Benny Blue. "Smells like real grub. Ought to taste right good after that saloon fodder."

Selby placed a hand on Renner's arm. "They say Wolf Leiken's workin' for Rawhide's widow now, Marty."

Renner hefted the double-holstered belt thoughtfully. "Now I know I'm going to call on Cynthia this evening."

9

THE MEAL had been excellent, the best Renner had tasted in years, and the company was up to the occasion. Emily was a gracious hostess, with Selby gay and laughing, a bright foil for the dour cynical Blue. And Mart Renner was quiet, appreciative, gratified to be among good friends once more.

The dishes done, Benny and Selby adjourned to the porch, and Emily slid into Renner's arms for a long tender kiss. "Please take care of yourself, Marty—for me," she murmured.

"I'll be all right, Em. You sure you'll be safe here?"

"Positive, Mart. I think Herne feels guilty about Hilliard's death, and tries to make it up to me. He won't let them hurt me any."

Renner strapped on his guns, tied down the holsters, hooked on his spurs, and was ready to go. They had a big rangy bay gelding for him, a horse almost worthy of replacing the coyote dun, he judged as he stepped into the leather. Benny was riding a tough wiry grulla, and Selby swung aboard a sleek glossy black. They rode out with Emily watching and waving from the lamplit doorway.

It was good to be back in the saddle, Renner found. Although he'd only been here two nights and two days, it seemed much longer. They cantered slowly toward the luminous glare of Front Street, and Benny Blue said: "A lot of woman, that Emily Hale."

"Did you know Hilliard?" asked Renner.

"Used to see him around," Benny said.

"Not a bad kid. Just hoot-owl wild and thirsty for firewater like young Selby here. Hope he ain't stickin' in your craw, Mart, after all the roosterin' around you probably done down south."

Renner laughed quietly. "You judge us all by your wicked and misspent youth, Benny. . . . Who lives in the big house with Cynthia?"

"Just the help—includin' maybe Wolf Leiken now. She has Dake Tirone and Guy Ormond and other leadin' citizens for company sometimes."

"You don't think there's anything between her and Tirone?"

"Nothin' that shows in public," Blue said.

"Is old Jubal still there?"

"Still in the stable, last I knew."

Selby said: "We're comin' with you, ain't we, Mart?"

Renner shook his head. "You boys drift around and keep an eye on things. If the Wolf makes a play, it will be in the open. I'll leave my horse at the corral behind the Brock, and meet you there in about an hour."

From the livery barn, Renner walked through backyards, alleys and streets toward the northeastern outskirts of Brandvil. It was with oddly mingled emotions that he approached his childhood home. The great fieldstone structure, as solid and enduring as Rawhide himself had been, loomed over this residential section. A stone wall surrounded the grounds. Lamplight glowing from the windows failed to warm or soften the general bleakness of the house.

Renner passed through the open gate in the wall, and up the flagstone path to the front entrance, studying the familiar gaunt outlines of the main structure, the stable and outbuildings. Now it housed the wilful blonde woman who had married his father and inherited everything that old Rawhide had sweated and schemed, labored and fought and bled for. A life's work come to nothing. A dynasty in the hands of strangers.

Cynthia herself answered the door. She was wearing a green silk evening gown with an extremely low-cut neckline. "Oh, it's you, Martin? Please come in. I've been hoping you'd call." Something told him she was aware of his true identity, and he was glad of it.

Renner followed the stately lady into the richly furnished living room, where a low fire crackled in the broad stone fireplace. She seated him on a long deep leather divan, proffered a hammered silver cigar-box, and poured drinks from a cut-glass decanter.

Sitting down beside him, Cynthia stared at his bruised features with a frank interest that was disconcerting. "Your homecoming has been eventful, I understand. Have you found out who's been shooting at you, Martin?"

"Not yet. But I will."

She smiled and gestured. "You find the place changed? For the better, I hope. It needed a woman's touch, Martin—after all the years."

"Yes, I guess it did." Renner sampled his drink, and drew on the expensive cigar.

"Strange, but I felt some kinship with you on the stage coach the other day," Cynthia said earnestly. "As if I had known you, or should know you. I believe our lives were destined to cross, Martin." She slid closer, her fragrant nearness disturbing, her blue eyes warm and intent on his lean hard profile. Cynthia swayed still nearer, bare shoulder and warm thigh touching him, invitation plain on her face.

Renner shifted uneasily, Cynthia smiled.

"Do you want to discuss your legacy, Martin?" she asked. "No? Then what would you like to talk about?"

He looked at her, straight and cold. "About who killed Rawhide."

Her face froze and her golden head recoiled somewhat. "What do you mean? What are you talking about?"

"You must know my father was murdered. Maybe you know who did it." He was purposely brutal, hoping to shock some admission out of her.

Cynthia stared at him. "You'd better leave at once!"

Renner laughed softly. "In due time, ma'am." He drained his glass and stood up, pacing about the plush room and puffing on the cigar. He looked into the room that had been Rawhide's den. The gun rack was still there, but the old buffalo gun was missing from its place.

"What became of that old Sharps fifty-six?" he demanded.

"How should I know?" Cynthia countered, a harshness about her lips and eyes. "I don't know one gun from another." She rose and walked after him. "What difference does it make? There are enough rifles left."

Renner laid the cigar in an ashtray. "The one I mean is the rifle that killed my father. Has Dake Tirone got it? Or did he lend it to Black Jack Herne?" Renner laid it on deliberately, in an effort to crack her gilt shell.

"Martin, you're being ridiculous." Cynthia caught his arm, pulled him around, and eased herself against him. "I don't want to quarrel with you. I like you, Martin." She wrapped ardent arms about his neck and drew his head down, lifting her hungry mouth to his, pressing the full length of her lush figure to him. Renner stayed aloof and rigid for a moment. Then against all reason he was holding and kissing her.

Cynthia drew back a trifle and said huskily: "I like you, Martin. I could—more than like you. Stay with me a while, darling."

Suddenly Renner was sickened of her and of himself. He could have this woman, and he might learn the truth about his father's death from her. But he couldn't go through with it. He was seared with shame for having gone this far. "I can't, Cynthia," he muttered. "You were my father's wife."

"I can save your life, Martin," she pleaded. "If you don't stay with me, they'll kill you."

"Who will, Cynthia? Who are 'they'?"

"Whoever it is that's been shooting at you—and beating you. I don't know. But I'm afraid, Martin, terribly afraid."

"I can't stay anywhere, until I find out who killed Rawhide."

Cynthia shook him with amazing strength and ferocity. "You're a fool, Martin! Look at me! Look at all I can give you. An empire! Can't you see what you're throwing away? . . . Along with your life."

"I can't help it." Without realizing it Renner pushed her away, failing to conceal his distaste.

She gazed incredulously. Then she flamed into fury: "Get out! Go on, get yourself killed! You're too foolish to live!"

Renner smiled wryly. "You might have something there, ma'am. Are you going to turn your Wolf loose on me?"

"If I do you won't reach the gate alive!"

"Maybe so. And maybe you'll have a dead Wolf on your hands."

Cynthia slapped him. "Go on, get out! Get out and die in the gutter where you belong. Your own father said you were good for nothing!"

"Thank you, ma'am." Renner turned and left. Surely she'd send Leiken after him now.

He went out and down the flagstone walk, loosening the right-hand gun in its leather and waiting for the footsteps behind him. The night air smelled faintly of Cherokee roses, and the rooftops of Brandvil were frosted silver in the moonlight. Renner reached the gate in the stone wall, and turned along the dirt path toward town.

The sound came then.

Renner made a full turn, spine prickling coldly and throat dry and tight. Wolf Leiken emerged from the gateway and faced him in the moonlight, a lazy, lounging, deadly figure in black, eyes shining palely and hair showing white under his hat.

"I don't want to kill you, kid," Leiken said. "Why don't you clear out of town?"

"Who's paying you—besides the widow?"

"Nobody. But that don't matter. Just you pull out of here."

"No, Wolf," said Renner. "For one thing, I want to kill you. I've waited a long time for this."

Wolf Leiken sighed. "So you're asking for

it, like your brother Doak did? Well, it might as well be me as Herne's gunnies. From me you get a fair shake, at least."

"The first I've had in Brandvil. I appreciate it, Wolf."

"Friend of yours just went to work for Mill Iron. Name of Coke Tansill. He kinda wanted you himself, but he's a mite late . . . Reach, boy, or you'll never clear leather."

They moved simultaneously, swift blurs of motion in the shadowy light, the flame from their guns blossoming together, the reports merged in a single shattering roar. The Colt springing in his hand, Renner saw Wolf Leiken's muzzle-flash spurt on a downward slant, while his own leaped level and straight. Mart had the first one home solid, and Leiken was jerking and breaking at the knees, when his bullet raked a spray of dirt across Renner's boots.

Martin Renner pulled down from the recoil and fired again, the bright blast beating Leiken backward as he strained to control his gunhand for another shot. The Wolf's shoulders struck the far side of the gate, and his weapon roared upward at the starry sky as he hung there. Toppling slowly forward then, Wolf Leiken crashed full length across the gateway on the flagstones. Looking shriveled and shrunken in his dark suit, hat tipped forward and silvery head glimmering, he lay dead.

Within the stone wall Renner heard a door burst open and a woman cry out in horror and disbelief. He swung around and strode away, with the smoking gun still hanging in his big right hand, the taste of powder rank in his dry mouth.

There was one of them, one of the worst, and it evened the score for Doak and cut the odds down some. There was no regret in Renner, but a dull sickness of mind and body. Well, it had to be done. He wished Rawhide and Doak could have seen it. . . .

He was crossing the street to cut for the livery corrals, when Sheriff Abel Sullers came forward under the cottonweed trees. "I'm taking you this time, Martin. You been shooting again, and this time I figure somebody's dead."

"Right, Abe. It's Wolf Leiken, and he forced it on me. You'll find him back there in the gate."

"You beat the Wolf to the draw? Tell that to a jury. You're under arrest."

"Who'd you arrest for the murder of Sam Derry?"

"He died in a fire."

"Sure, and my father committed suicide," Renner said disgustedly. "Don't try to run me in, Abe. I took the Wolf like he took my brother. You didn't arrest Leiken for that ten years ago."

Sullers bared his teeth under the neat mustache. "Get out of town then. You're nothing

but a walking corpse in Brandvil. You—" He halted with an exasperated expression when boots trod the plank walk in back of Renner. It was Guy Ormond again, tall and grave in the leaf-patterned shadows.

"Self-defense, Abel, and I'll testify to it," Ormond declared. "I saw the whole thing."

"You're always prying me off this boy," complained Sullers. "What kind of a game is this, Guy?"

Ormond cast a withering look at the lawyer. "I could ask who you're working for, that you're forever trying to lock Martin up."

"All right, all right," muttered Sullers. "It's never anything but self-defense in this valley. He's all yours again, Guy. Enjoy him—while you can." He stalked on to have his look at Leiken's body, kicking at pebbles and grumbling to himself.

Guy Ormond smiled at Renner. "Pretty work with the gun, Martin. Rawhide would have loved that, son. You'd better come home with me tonight. You'll be safe there, Marty."

"Sorry, Guy, but I'm meeting somebody," Renner said. "I'm much obliged but this can't wait. See you later."

"Well, watch out for yourself," Ormond said, somewhat testily. "Everybody in the Don-drino seems to want you dead."

Blue and Selby were waiting with horses behind the Brock House, nervous and agitated. Selby said, "Let's ride, Mart. Herne and his gunmen headed for Emily's cabin. Must of found out she took you in."

"You and the Wolf had it?" Benny Blue asked, as they mounted.

Renner nodded. "He's a dead Wolf, Benny. Who's Herne got with him? The big three? That's fine."

They wheeled off into a hard run for the southwest perimeter of the settlement. They must think Em knows more than she does, Renner mused. They're afraid she's talked, or will talk to me, just as they feared Sam Derry might. But they wouldn't kill a woman. . . . Or would they? . . . Renner felt a freezing flutter of panic.

The cottage, isolated on its shelf, stood in the jigsaw shadows of the trees, its windows dark and nothing stirring. Renner led the way in at a reckless gallop, afraid of what they might find. There were no horses at the rack. Herne's party had come and gone.

They flung off, dropped the reins, and plunged inside with guns ready. But the place was empty. They had carried Emily away with them, somewhere into the night.

Outside, Benny Blue crouched to examine the prints in the moonbeams. "Five horses. They brought one for Emily. So they're going

farther than the Castle. Up north to Herne's ranch, most likely."

"Let's get after 'em," Renner said, with irritable impatience.

"Take it calm, son," advised Benny. "They ain't got wings, and they ain't goin' to harm Emily right away. It's a long ways up-country. We'll need bedrolls, jackets, grub, rifles, and shells."

"Come on, Benny, come on!" Renner said. "You talk too much in your old age. Let's get what we need and start riding."

"Sure, I talk," Benny Blue said, with a gargoyle grin. "It's a bartender's only revenge."

10

WITH BENNY BLUE reading sign until the direction was established, they pressed northward through the broken wilderness until the moon set, and then caught a few hours sleep in the blackness before dawn.

When the sun rose over the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, the three men were in the saddle once more, cutting for sign and then climbing or skirting a series of sandstone cliffs, which rose like mammoth terraced steps to the high plateau country of eastern Utah. As the sun soared higher, these palisades blazed with many colors ranging from chalky white to brilliant vermilion, tier on tier of painted rock walls in a landscape of savage splendor.

The tracks of five horsemen ran before them, plain in places, almost invisible in others. The Herne group had made no real effort to obscure their trace. Benny watched the prints closely for any undue lag or freshness that might indicate an ambush. He was certain now that their destination was Black Jack's unworked spread on the tablelands.

"Ought to get there about sundown," Benny Blue said.

"Good," said Renner. "We can move in after dark."

"Herne never kept a crew up here," Selby said. "Might have one now, I suppose. We can tell when we see the layout."

"Probably the rustlers use his ranch for a headquarters," Benny said. "I wouldn't doubt that hungry Herne was mixed up in stock stealing too."

"Wonder who's riding for him?" Renner said, thinking again of some hookup between Black Jack Herne and Dake Tirone.

"Whoever it was shot my dad," Selby said, teeth on edge.

"We'll find out, kid," said Benny Blue gently. "And when we do, we'll be on the way to the ones that killed Rawhide Renner, too."

"If we can get Herne alive, we'll learn a lot tonight, boys," Martin Renner said.

They rode onward with the sun dropping nearer the Wasatches and taking on fiery color, rimming the western clouds with flame.

The sun was setting when they dismounted on a juniper ridge to survey the spread that was their objective. The buildings occupied a low bench, backed by a redstone mesa, above a creek that wound eastward across the tableland toward the Green River. The house was of peeled logs, long and low with a gallery across the front. The barn and sheds were built of planks, and the corrals were of the stockade type. It didn't look like a working ranch, even with a half-dozen horses in the corral. The sixth pony probably belonged to the caretaker, which made the odds five to three. But the advantage of surprise should even the balance.

"Any plan in mind, Mart?" inquired Benny Blue.

"Don't need much of one," Renner said, chewing on the tobacco borrowed from Benny. "They won't expect anybody until tomorrow—if at all. We can go in before the moon comes up." We *could* wait until they're asleep, he thought. But that would give them too much time to work on Emily. . . . Get in there quick and hit them hard, was all he could think of. Wipe out the gunmen and take Black Jack Herne alive.

The sun was gone behind the Wasatches, the light and colors fading on the western horizon, while the lavender shadows spread purple and then black upon the earth. Under the junipers the three men checked their carbines and six-guns, watched the yellow shine of lamp-light in the windows of the ranch house, and waited for darkness.

11

THE SPRING NIGHT was black before moonrise, with frogs shrilling in the marshes, as they led their horses in under the trees along the murmuring creek. Crickets sang in the grass, and fireflies traced green-blue courses through the brush, and overhead a nighthawk whimpered in flight. The stream was a blurred gray ribbon on their right, laced with white where it chuckled among boulders, and the butte beyond the ranch site loomed high and angular against the stars.

Tying their horses in the cottonwoods, they went forward with carbines in hand and climbed to the level summit of the shelf at the rear of the barn and outbuildings. Benny Blue worked to the left around the corrals, while Selby swung right to circle the sheds. Renner moved straight in and stopped to survey the scene from the forward corner of the barn. The lighted windows

of the log house were about fifty yards away. A door slammed and a lantern came bobbing across the yard in his direction. The man carrying it was a bearded, big-shouldered stranger in a buckskin jacket. He was heading for the barn.

He entered the open arch, hung the lantern on a peg, and rummaged around in there. Renner leaned his carbine on the wall, drew his right-hand Colt, and slipped around the edge toward the wide doorway. He didn't want to shoot this one, if he could avoid it.

The sudden barking of a dog tore the stillness, and the man whirled from the grain box as Renner reached the doorway. The man reached and Renner drove straight at him, striking with his gun barrel at the shaggy head. The solid impact jarred Renner's arm and bowed that big head, but the man's pistol exploded as it fell to the earthen floor. The roar seemed to fill the whole night. Renner slashed again with his barrel, beating his victim flat on the bearded face. Out for a good time, but the damage was done. Gunshots were blazing from the house when Renner doused the lantern and dodged into cover beside the entrance.

Blue and Selby opened up with their carbines from the flanks, hammering away at the muzzle flashes and smashing windows in the ranch house. But the element of surprise was lost, the situation thrown into a stalemate. The bark of a dog, the accidental discharge of a pistol, and everything went wrong.

The lights had gone out in the main building and the gunfire died away. Silence washed back in the darkness, as the echoes thinned out along the steep wall of the mesa. If we wait till moonrise we won't be able to move at all, Renner reflected. I've got to take a chance and get in close and flush them out.

Finding the coiled rope he had noticed earlier, Renner bound the unconscious man securely and took his gun. Sliding out the way he had come in, Mart picked up his carbine and dropped behind the barn. He followed the row of sheds to Selby's position between the last two, and left the carbine and extra pistol there. Selby could use them in covering Renner's advance.

"I'm going around back, Sel," said Renner. "You keep firing and Benny'll cut loose with you."

"Don't try to take 'em all yourself, Marty," drawled Selby.

Renner skirted the last shed and swung an arc toward the base of the mesa. Selby started shooting swiftly, and Blue chimed in from the other wing. Gunflames jetted back from three front windows, indicating that Garay and Elgart and Webley were on the job. Herne was probably hiding behind Emily in some back corner.

The rifles were still crashing away out front, when Renner arrived at the rear of the house in

the deep shadow of the butte. None too soon, for a ruddy golden moon was peeping over the faraway snow peaks of the Colorado Rockies. Nothing stirred in the rear area.

The back door was ajar. Renner was stalking toward it—when the big dog leaped snarling at his throat. He lurched backward under the driving animal, as orange light torched from the doorway.

Somehow Renner had got his arm up in time to keep those teeth from his neck. The great jaws closed on his forearm, and the hurtling dog knocked him flat on his shoulder blades beneath that hairy, hard-muscled body. The beast shuddered and went limp as a bullet hit it, the fangs loosening on Martin's arm. Another gunblast slanted down, the dog's body jerking again, and Mart glimpsed the fat face of Jack Herne in the flash.

Then Herne stumbled onto the porch and fell floundering, with Emily Hale reeling out after him, a stick of wood in her hand. Renner flung off the dead brute and regained his feet, slamming his gun across Herne's drooping head. Jack grunted and dropped in a motionless heap with his oily hair in the gravel.

"Wait here and stay down low, Em," said Renner, thrusting Herne's pistol into her trembling hands.

"Don't, Marty! Don't go in there," she moaned.

"Got to. Won't take long now." Renner stepped inside the kitchen and picked his way through darkness toward the front of the house, where the guns were still hammering steadily. Moonbeams silvered the eastern windows and filtered into the murky interior.

"Jack!" somebody shouted. "What you got out back, Jack?"

Mule Garay laughed. "Hell, he's probably shootin' at shadows."

"No, they must be comin' in the back way!" Pine Elgart yelled. "They got Jack. The hell with this, I'll take mine outside!"

A door burst open and boots trampled the front veranda, and Elgart was gone when Renner reached that room and threw down at the hunched form of Spider Webley. The Spider writhed about and fired back, spouting splinters against Renner's cheek, and then Spider scrambled over his windowsill and dropped outside. Renner looked for Garay and couldn't locate him. Then he heard the Mule's disgusted voice in an adjacent room: "You crazy bastards! You'll run right into it!" And Garay was coming nearer as he spoke.

Renner lunged in that direction and they met chest to chest in the dim doorway, grappling and hacking with their gun barrels, too close to bring the muzzles to bear. Mart felt the tremendous power of the giant, but in his cold

raging fury Renner could match it and more. As they wrestled about in primitive combat, Renner took an elbow in the throat, a knee in the groin, and a sledging steel blow on the left shoulder. But Mart freed his own right hand with an explosive wrench, and laid the barrel of the .44 alongside Garay's skull with full whipping force.

Groaning and gasping, Mule Garay staggered away and tried to swing his pistol into line, but Martin Renner had already leveled off and triggered. The flame lashed into Garay, breaking him in the middle and rocking him backward. Mule's gun blared into the floor at his feet. Renner squeezed again, the Colt lifting hard against his wrist, and Mule Garay spun around, took three plunging strides, and went down with a headlong crash, crumpling a table and chairs under his bulk.

Renner made sure of him, and stepped out on the front gallery.

The yard was flooded with moonlight now. Off to the left Spider Webley was a twisted bundle on the grass in front of young Selby, who stood smiling crookedly over his smoking six-gun. To the right Pine Elgart was down on knees and head, arched starkly against the foot of a cottonwood, while Benny Blue watched from the edge of the corral with his carbine held casually under his arm. Powdersmoke still swirled lazily on the moonlit air.

"Em all right, Marty?" called Selby, walking forward.

"Okay—I think."

"You save any of 'em, Mart?" asked Benny.

"Herne's alive. And the one in the barn."

They dragged Garay's great body outside, before Renner brought Emily back into the smoke-filled house. Selby and Blue carried Herne in, bleeding from the scalp and senseless. The place reeked of gunpowder and mortar, with the windows all broken, the furniture tumbled about, and the floor littered with glass fragments and brass shells. Lamplight seemed to accentuate the morbid disorder.

Renner looked at Emily. "Did they—did they hurt you, Em?"

She shook her dark head. "No—but they had ideas for tonight. They seemed to think I'd given you a lot of information about Herne and Company—which I know nothing about. Tom never told me anything."

"Who's the man out in the barn?"

"Colfax," said Emily. "Stays up here on the ranch. I don't think he's in too deep, Mart . . . Is he—hurt bad?"

"Not too bad—a head wound, like Black Jack here."

"And the other three?" Emily shivered violently, as Renner shook his bronze head. "Well, it's probably a good thing."

"Best thing that's happened in Utah in years, Em," said Benny Blue.

"I'll get the horses," Selby said. "Too far for old Ben to walk."

"Hunt up some spades and shovels too, son," said Benny.

"Goin' to bring Colfax to and let him dig," Selby drawled. "I never took to a shovel none whatever."

Emily turned toward the kitchen. "I'll make coffee and fix something to eat."

"All right, Em," said Renner. He wasn't hungry, but she needed something to do. "I feel rotten, Ben."

"It had to be done, Mart," said Benny. "It'll wear off in time—like any hangover. What we need is a damn good drink. Must be plenty whiskey here."

But even with the whiskey burning away the rank powder taste and warming the inner hollowness, Martin Renner felt depressed and miserable. Emily was safe, Blue and Selby unhurt. But Renner couldn't derive any feeling of satisfaction from this.

Perhaps it would come later. Right now all he could think of was that he had killed two men in the last forty-eight hours, and would have to kill more before it was finished.

Benny refilled the glasses with a steady, gnarled hand. "Bartender's holiday, Mart. But I don't mind, long as I can pour for myself, too."

12

THE NEXT afternoon they started south for Brandvil, with Emily Hale and Martin Renner riding ahead, followed by Benny Blue and young Selby on either side of Black Jack Herne, slumped in a despondent stupor and tied to his saddle. Herne hadn't recovered from his head injury enough to do any talking, but there'd be time for that later.

They had buried the three gunfighters and the dog, and left Colfax and the extra horses behind at the ranch. Colfax hadn't divulged any information either, beyond the fact that Herne's brand was Circle H, but they concluded he wasn't important enough to take into town. They had Jack Herne, and one semi-invalid prisoner was sufficient.

Herne, no longer tied in the saddle, rode morosely between Selby and Blue at the front, with Emily and Renner in the rear. Here and there sharp-profiled buttes jutted from the tabletop, the surface of which was slashed with canyons and arroyos. Cattle lowed mournfully and sheep bawled plaintively from far grasslands. The chatter of magpies and the tattooing of woodpeckers sounded from clumps of pinon and

cedar. Herons flapped along the water courses, and eagles and hawks soared over the hills.

They were in a deep narrow passage now, barely wide enough for two abreast, with eroded sandstone walls rising sheerly on either side. Jack Herne was at the point, with Blue and Selby close behind him, while Emily and Renner brought up the rear. Along the top rims boulders were balanced precariously, and the cliff faces were scarred and gouged from previous slides.

It came with shocking suddenness and a heavy rushing roar, as if the entire right-hand wall was falling on them. A huge boulder plunged from the rimrock, loosening lesser chunks and building into an avalanche, hurtling downward at the five riders with thunderous speed. Dust smoked and boiled upward, shutting out the sunlight, and the horses pitched and whirled in frenzied terror. Renner pulled his bay around and crowded Emily's roan back up-trail, the only chance for them.

Herne's horse had bolted straight ahead in panic, and Jack nearly lost his seat in the abrupt flight. Benny's grulla and Selby's black were tangled up together, rearing, snorting and pawing the air. When they got the broncs under control, it was too late to take after Herne. They had to pull back, in order to escape the landslide. It was close then. Benny and Selby were pelted with pebbles and dirt, as they wheeled their mounts and fled upgrade after Renner and Emily.

The slide surged to the bottom with a shattering smash that made the earth shudder, burying the trail beneath tons of jagged sandstone, piling up ever higher in the defile. Dust and powdered rock clouded the air, billowing dark and thick. Herne was cut off from them, freed by a freak of fortune, safe on the down-mountain side of the blockade.

Then the rifle fire broke out on the rim, flames lancing through the dense haze and reports crashing from wall to wall. They knew now that rockslide had not been accidental. Renner drove Emily's roan on ahead, with shots ricocheting around them. Selby and Blue came up behind Mart, crouched low over their pommels in the searching lash of lead.

Renner lifted his carbine from the boot and levered in a shell, marveling at how the marksmen above could be missing when down here they were like fish in a dry barrel. But the snipers couldn't see them through the boiling dust and debris. Renner started firing almost straight upward at the winking red muzzle lights along the rimrock. Blue and Selby were shooting back of him, working carbines swiftly to drive the enemy back from the lip of the gorge, and soon the rifles slacked off at the top.

A bend in the corridor brought temporary

security, but they had to keep running hard. The men up there would follow along the heights, and once away from the slide visibility would clear. "Keep going, Em!" yelled Renner. "Ride for it!" They put their broncs up the slope at a killing pace, the clatter of hoofs loud between the confining cliffs, and the men on the rough craggy summit could not match this speed. The shooting was well behind them now, the bullets snarling off rock surfaces and scattering showers of stone splinters. Then another bend in the walls afforded a measure of real safety.

"Who the hell you suppose is up there?" grumbled Benny Blue, as they reloaded their carbines.

They could only guess. It might be someone coming to Herne's assistance, or somebody else bent on wiping them all out. The unknown rustlers . . . Gunmen from Mill Iron or from the Castle . . . Cowboys riding for Detwiler and Wingate . . . Whoever it was had stalked them well, plotted their course nicely, and timed the attack almost to perfection. Actually to perfection, if the intent was to rescue Herne rather than obliterate the whole party.

On a broad terrace in the shadow of a chalky cliff stained with ochre and crimson, they halted to rest the lathered, blowing horses. The enemy riflemen had been left well out of range by this time.

"What now, Marty?" asked Benny, biting off a fresh chew of tobacco.

Renner drank from his canteen, and waved toward the boulders tumbled at the base of the cliff. "Hole up here and rest—and see what happens. Don't think they'll follow up, but if they do we'll be ready." He smiled at the girl. "Stand it all right, Em?"

"Just scared to death is all," Emily said, as they led their mounts into the sheltering rocks.

"Hope they do come," Selby said, teeth flashing white in his blackened face. "Like a good look at 'em—in my gunights."

"Think we'd better pick up Herne's trace, Ben?" asked Renner.

"I'd say so, Mart. Find out where he runs to, and who he's runnin' with. We need that fat little jasper."

"Better split up, then," Renner said. "Sel can take Em into town, and we'll go after Herne."

Selby looked so unhappy, that Emily chided, "You don't act eager to escort me, Sel."

"Rather escort you than any gal I know—and I like gals," Selby said. "But when there's fightin', I like to be in it, Em."

"Won't be any, Sel," said Renner. "Just a lot of tiresome tracking."

"All right, I'm resigned to my fate." Selby laughed and winked a blue eye at Emily. "But don't blame me, Mart, if your girl never looks kindly at you again."

"Em, you'd better stay at Doc Seabrey's until things quiet down," Renner suggested. "We'll meet you folks in town as soon as we can."

Selby grinned. "Don't be too long, or you'll lose your girl for sure, Marty."

On a terrace below the blockaded passage they parted some time later, Emily and Selby continuing on down the slope, while Blue and Renner turned off to hunt for Herne's sign. The flinty terrain made tracking difficult, but Benny Blue was up to it and soon on the trace.

Three other horsemen had joined Herne, reported Benny, and gone on together, eastward along a broad shelf with one rose-tinted cliff rising at the left and a sheer orange-hued wall dropping on the right. Renner couldn't make much out of the faint signs, but Benny read them like a printed page.

"Didn't figure Herne had three more gunnies who'd come up and pull him out of a tight," Benny muttered.

The trail ran eastward toward the Taloncillos, dipping and rising along terraces between the stepped palisades, until the sandstone walls were left behind at last and the terrain changed to rolling timbered hills. In the waning light, the prints veered southward in the general direction of Mill Iron. "Can't read this much more, Mart."

"Maybe this is a good time to visit Mill Iron, Ben," said Renner.

"Why not, son?" Benny said. "It used to be home to both of us."

13

THE LIGHTS of Mill Iron, scattered on the wide bluff above the Little Don, looked like the nighttime glow of a small settlement. Renner drew rein and stared at the old familiar scene with sorrow and loneliness. This, more than the house in town, had been his home. He hadn't been particularly happy here, but all the time-mellowed memories came back in a flood, richer and dearer than reality, to clutch at his throat, make his eyes smart and his spine tingle.

The full impact of his father's death seemed to strike him for the first time. Here Rawhide had reigned supreme, a mighty but roughly benevolent monarch, a giant who cast a long shadow over the entire Dondrino country. Rawhide Renner had fought Indians and Mexicans, outlaws and renegades, to tame this frontier and build up his brand. Now a sleek stranger with Eastern manners and clothes stood in his place. Dake Tirone, fronting for that blonde strumpet in Brandvil. With a gunpack led by Pat Mulcahy and Cactus Prager . . . And Coke Tansill, up from the Rio Grande on Mart Renner's trail.

"It ain't changed so much—in looks," Benny Blue said softly. "But the heart's sure gone out of it, boy."

"I kind of hate to go in there, Ben," said Renner. "But we're going anyway." They dropped from the foothills into the valley, their mounts jaded and slow, the men cramped and weary in the leather.

The large square fieldstone ranch-house faced the river, a porch across the front, alders and cottonwoods shading the yard. In the background were the barns, corrals and sheds, bunkhouse, cookshack, and blacksmith shop. A store and a row of frame houses set apart, built by Rawhide for old employes with families, so that it did resemble a little community. There was a difference, an emptiness with Rawhide gone. All the Renners gone except Martin, and he no longer had a place here.

The front of the big house was dark, and they rode around back to the lighted windows of the office. Guitar music and singing issued from the long bunkhouse, and the clanging of iron dinned from the blacksmith's where a forge flared cherry-red. There was some activity in the stable and main barn. Insects buzzed against lamplit windows and screen doors, and formed humming clouds around the lamp posts that illuminated the spacious area between the house and outbuildings.

Renner and Blue swung off and tied up at the hitch-rail, and Dake Tirone appeared in the office doorway. He wore a pleated white shirt, open at the throat, and a gun slung against black trousers. He was as darkly handsome and refined as Renner remembered, and the elegance was there even when he dressed casually for comfort. His crisp black hair gleamed in the light, and his smile was gracious and friendly.

"Why, hello, Benny. And Martin. Glad to see you both. Come in."

The office was cleaner than Renner had ever seen it, and the furnishings were new, which came as a relief to him. He didn't want to see Tirone or any other man sitting in Rawhide's old chair at the ancient battered desk that Tirone had probably junked. They paced about to limber their saddle-stiffened bodies, while Tirone lounged on the edge of his flat desk and poured whiskey into three glasses. They said they weren't hungry, in response to his polite query. The drinks were more welcome than food.

"I guess I should have recognized you that day on the stage, Martin," said Tirone. "Must have been too preoccupied to be observant. But perhaps you weren't anxious to be recognized?"

"Thought I was going to surprise my father," Renner drawled.

"So you actually didn't know he was dead?"

"That's right."

"It must have been a great shock."

"It was."

Dake Tirone nodded, with precisely the right degree of sympathy and understanding. "Rawhide was as nearly immortal as any man I've ever known, Martin. I feel lucky indeed to have known him, worked for him—and to have been his friend. A great man. His passing was a terrible loss to this country."

Renner was silent. There was nothing to fight here. This man was too smart, too polished and slick and suave. And tough underneath the debonair surface, like the finest tempered steel in a silken sheath.

"I've been hearing a good deal about you, Martin," Tirone went on. "Perhaps it's presumptuous of me to offer you employment, but a man like you can always command top wages on Mill Iron. I don't mean merely a riding job."

"Too busy to think about working—yet," Renner said.

"Yes, I understand you've been busy. And that you think your father was murdered."

"Don't you?"

Tirone was only a trifle startled. "No evidence of it. It was a closed case—until you came back. Do you think you're justified in starting a war over it, Martin?"

"Yes, I do," Renner said flatly. "Has Jack Herne been here?"

Tirone's cool answer was a total surprise. "Why, yes, he was here. Rode in with three of his men, in rather bad shape. Said three others had been killed up on the plateau. They went on into town."

"Why did Herne come here?"

"Because his flight led him this way, I suppose." Dake Tirone was calm, but there was anger in him—and menace. "But are you cross-examining me?"

"Sorry," Renner said. "I just want Herne so bad."

"Well, don't look for trouble with Mill Iron. I told Mulcahy and Prager to leave you alone. Don't make me rescind that order."

"I won't. Got enough troubles without hunting up any more. . . . Thanks for the drink. Come on, Benny."

Outside, a man was crossing the yard toward the office, and Renner saw something familiar in the set of his head and shoulders, the swing of arms and legs. A lean man with a triangular face, sharp features, and a jaunty insolence, his gun worn low in a tied-down holster. He saw Renner and stopped short, elbows out, right hand spread-fingered, eyes and mouth contemptuous and mocking. Tawny blond hair shone palely under his rakish hat.

"Tansill!" Dake Tirone called from the office door. "None of that here. I told you, man!"

"I ain't gunnin' for Renner," drawled Coke

Tansill lazily. "Thought he might throw down on me, is all . . . Honest, Mart, I didn't track you up here. Just wanted to see if this country lived up to your brag."

"You're a liar, Coke," said Renner easily. "But it can wait."

"On the level, Mart, that's over and done with," Tansill insisted, soft and slurred. "I ain't carryin' a grudge. It's buried down in Chihuahua with them boys of mine—and Glenway."

Renner and Blue mounted and rode out of Mill Iron along the wagon road toward the main highway and Brandvil.

"What do you think, Mart?" asked Benny Blue.

"Too much sweetness and light in there for me to swallow," Renner said. "I know Tansill came up here to get me, and he'll make his play when the time comes."

Renner wished they could flush the real enemy into the open and get this settled.

14

DOCTOR SEABREY, a bulky man with the shoulders of a bulldogger, the brutal face and hands of a prizefighter, had the softest of eyes and voices and the feather-light touch of a woman. He welcomed Emily Hale and young Selby, listened with interest to their story, and insisted on Selby's staying for supper with them. A bachelor, Doc lived with a Chinese cook and servant called Yam in a rambling frame house west of the central plaza. It was the nearest thing to a hospital in the Dontrino.

Seabrey was pleased to have company, delighted to put Emily up for as long as she wished. "The only time I've seen that boy Mart, he was unconscious," Doc complained.

While Emily bathed in her room, Selby scrubbed up and shaved with one of Doc's razors. Seabrey had a way of making you feel perfectly comfortable and at home. It was a good feeling, Selby thought, after living in saloons and cheap hotels and boarding places—or sleeping on the floor in Benny's room.

Martin Renner's homecoming had brought a change to Selby. After Pop was shot and Ma died, Selby had let go and drifted loosely in an alcoholic haze, lucky enough at gambling to keep himself in whiskey and women. Now he had something to live for again, to work and fight for with Mart Renner and Benny Blue. The same outfit had killed both his father and old Rawhide; a little two-bit rancher and the biggest cattle man in the valley. Jack Herne was involved, but there was somebody behind him.

Supper was pleasant with Yam serving and Doc the charming host, and Emily tired but

lovely in the soft amber light. Selby kept them laughing with self-derogatory tales of his misadventures in barrooms and gambling dens and dance halls. But underneath, they were all thinking and worrying about Renner and Blue.

"Can I borrow one of your saddle broncs, Doc?" asked Selby, the long cigar Seabrey had given him incongruous in his thin boyish face. "Want to scout around around some, and too lazy to walk. Our horses need a rest."

"The buckskin needs exercise, Sel," said Seabrey. "But you'd better not travel too far until you hear from Mart and Benny."

"I'll just drift around town. And thanks a lot, Doc."

Selby said so long, strapped on his guns, and put on hat and jacket. Out back in the stable, where he'd left his black and Emily's roan, Selby threw his saddle gear onto Seabrey's buckskin and tightened the double-cinches. The horse bucked a bit, but Selby soon had his head up and the capers ended.

He turned out toward the Crystal Castle on the western outskirts, with no definite course of action in mind. Halfway there he saw a pair of riders ahead, and his heart went up as he recognized the plump form of Black Jack Herne. This was almost too good to be true. The other man was a deputy sheriff named Ushkow, the hulking strong boy of Abel Sullers' force. So Herne had run to the law for protection, and Sullers being what he was had given it to him.

If Herne got to the Castle, it would be one hell of a job to dig him out of there. Even with Garay and Elgart and Webley dead, Black Jack had enough gunhands to make the Castle practically impregnable. Less skilled and loyal than the top three had been, but they made up in numbers what they lacked in quality. Selby knew he had to snatch Herne right here and now, regardless of the deputy, and hold him somewhere until Renner and Blue arrived.

Selby yanked down his hatbrim and booted the buckskin forward, glad that he had switched horses. Herne and Ushkow glanced back, but took no alarm. Closing up on them, Selby drew his right-hand gun and kned his mount toward the deputy's side, at the left of Herne. The street was dark and quiet, except for dim house-lights and slow clopping hoofbeats.

Ushkow turned and peered, sullen and suspicious, as Selby rode alongside of him. The deputy was grabbing at his holster when Selby leaned lithely out and chopped hard with his gun barrel. The crushing stroke bowed Ushkow over the saddlehorn and spilled him heavily into the gravel, where he sprawled without further movement.

Herne yelled, "Selby!" and put spurs to his

mount, and Ushkow's plunging horse barred Selby's way momentarily. Pulling clear and kicking the buckskin into a gallop, Selby sheathed his gun and shook out his rope in the wake of Herne's frantic flight for the Castle. Spinning a loop on the dead run, Selby made his cast and saw it settle cleanly over the man ahead. Taking a turn on the horn, Selby reined his horse to a skidding stop. Jack Herne was jerked bodily out of the saddle to bounce and roll in the boiling dirt, while his panicked mount kept on at runaway speed.

Swinging down into the swirling dust, Selby found Herne senseless from the jarring force of his fall. "Herney boy," Selby said, "you sure are takin' a beatin' for your sins these days." Exerting all the strength in his lean frame, Selby heaved the fat little man up and across in front of the pommel. Climbing aboard, Selby put the buckskin into a swift spurt around the next corner, and debated where to lodge his prisoner.

After rejecting Emily's cabin and Doc Seabrey's place, he decided on Benny Blue's room over the Alhambra. There was an outside stairway at the rear of the saloon. Selby could circle back through back streets and alleys, drag Herne upstairs and lock him in Benny's quarters.

An hour later, with Herne securely bound, gagged, and locked in Benny's room upstairs, Selby was lounging idly over a drink at the Alhambra bar. He had checked at Doc Seabrey's but Renner and Blue weren't in yet. Emily Hale, worn out from her ordeal on the plateaus, had taken the sedative Doc prescribed and gone to bed.

As Selby finished his drink and started to leave, the batwings flapped inward and Abe Sullers entered with a drawn gun, four deputies filing in and fanning out on either side of him, their pistols lined on Selby. One of them was Ushkow, a crude, bloody bandage on his hatless head, a murderous look on his flat, ugly features.

"That's him," Ushkow grated, and Sullers said, "Get 'em up, Selby!"

Selby grinned and raised his hands slowly. "You sure you got enough help, Abe? Maybe you ought to call out the cavalry."

"You're a real funny boy," Sullers said. "Maybe you can laugh off a murder charge. And assault with intend to kill, on a peace officer. Get his guns, one of you."

A deputy stepped warily behind Selby, took his guns, and prodded him forward. There was a gasp of protest then, as Ushkow moved in snarling and struck savagely with his gun barrel. Selby crumpled and fell into the sawdust.

"I owed the son that one," Ushkow growled.

"Too bad Benny wasn't here to take that shotgun to 'em," someone said, hoarse with anger and disgust. . . .

Doc Seabrey, summoned to the jailhouse to attend an injured prisoner, was not unduly surprised to find the patient was young Selby. When the sheriff said Selby was in for murder, and named Herne's three gunmen as the victims, Seabrey laughed aloud. "How long since it's been murder to kill skunks, Abe?"

After a thorough examination of the gashed scalp, Seabrey looked up solemnly. "This boy's hurt bad, Abe. His skull's fractured, depressed against the brain. Have to operate and relieve that pressure, if he's to live."

"Go ahead then, operate."

"Can't do it here. Have to take him to my office, Abe. Get a litter ready."

Abe Sullers swore. "Don't hardly seem worth the bother, when he's going to hang anyway. But I'll send for a stretcher."

A stretcher was brought from the undertaker's, and two eminent business men followed it into the jail. Clyde Voorhees, who conducted the furniture-and-undertaking business, and Lute Kemper, owner of the largest general merchandise store.

"Congratulations on capturing Selby, Abe," said Kemper, a bloated man with a pompous air.

"When you going to get young Renner and old Blue?" asked the emaciated Voorhees, who looked more like a cadaver than most of the corpses he prepared for burial.

"In due time," Sullers said.

Brushing past Kemper and Voorhees with annoyance, Sheriff Sullers strode outside after the small procession. "Congratulations on capturing Selby!" he repeated, spitting with explosive scorn. "Five men with the drop on one kid, and that stupid ox of an Ushkow had to beat the boy's head in. When Renner and Blue get back I won't be able to find a single one of my brave deputies! But why should I care? I've got no stake in this tangle, and I'm sick of taking orders from all sides."

Yeah, to hell with it, Sullers thought. I don't care a damn where Herne is. I wish he was buried up there with them three strutting Gundogs of his.

The sheriff resolved to go out to the Castle, get a bottle and that fiery little half-Mex girl, and forget about everything else. Overnight, anyhow.

15

IT WAS ANOTHER night in Brandvil, and counting back Renner discovered it was his seventh night here in the Dondrino. It seemed a great deal longer than that, so much life—and death—had been crammed into that one week.

He and Benny were sitting in that room

over the Alhambra, and Jack Herne was stretched on the bed, untied and ungagged now but helpless and in utter despair. A far cry from the suave superior proprietor of the Castle, this Jack Herne was a thoroughly beaten, sick, frightened, and dejected man in filthy tattered clothes.

Selby was in bed at Doc Seabrey's, supposedly hovering between life and death, but in reality suffering only from a minor headache. He admitted it wasn't as bad as some of the hangovers he had sweated out. There was no skull fracture, no operation. Seabrey had employed that ruse to get Selby out of jail. Emily Hale was in residence at the hospital, ostensibly serving as Doc Seabrey's nurse and assistant.

Sheriff Sullers had vanished, and his deputies were not in evidence. The law seemed to have disappeared from Brandvil, without causing any change in the everyday life of the community. Mill Iron had come to town in force but thus far had precipitated no disturbance.

"Tell us who killed Rawhide and we'll turn you loose," Renner said again, leaning toward the pitiful figure on the bed.

"I don't know," whimpered Herne. "Honest to God, I don't. I didn't do it. None of my boys did it."

"Why'd you try to kill me then, that night at the Castle?"

"We didn't. You got smart. I told the boys to rough you up."

"What made you carry Emily off, Jack?" asked Renner.

"Mule Garay wanted her, like I told you. . . . Why don't you go after Rawhide's widow and Duke Tirone?"

"They claim you had Rawhide murdered. And you figure they did it?"

Herne moaned. "I don't *know!* They profited from it, I didn't."

Benny said: "Heat up a knife blade. That'll loosen his damn tongue."

Renner shook his rusty brown head. "Drift downstairs, Ben, and drop the word that I've got Jack Herne and he's going to squeal. Then we'll set him loose and see who picks him up."

"That's murder!" bleated Herne. "Might's well shoot me right here."

"Not if you're innocent. Nobody'll hurt you."

There was a rap on the door, and with a snort Benny admitted Selby. "The invalid! A little knock on the noggin puts him to bed."

"With a nurse like Em, who wouldn't stay in bed?" Selby laughed. "The town's crawlin' with Mill Iron, I hear, but the sheriff and his boys are missin'." He looked at Herne. Is this the great Black Jack?"

Benny went out to spread the story, and Selby poured himself a drink. Returning shortly, Benny said: "It's started. Let it simmer a

mite. No law in sight, but all kinds of Mill Iron. Tirone's out to the widow's, they say. Didn't see your friend Tansill though, Marty."

They sat around smoking in thoughtful silence, until Benny raised his white head and seamed brown face. "Mart, what did you say they told you about Rawhide's will? That you was cut out, huh? . . . Now come to think of it, I heard old Rawhide say many a time that no matter if you turned out to be the worst unhung bandit in the country, he'd never cut you off."

"Could've changed his mind, Benny, when I didn't write or anything," Renner said. "Maybe the blonde helped change it. Anyway Guy Ormond wouldn't lie about it."

"No-o, Guy's as honest a bankin' man as you'll ever see, I reckon."

Selby had brought their horses and left them saddled and ready behind the saloon. He started out to take a look at them, and Renner said: "Sel, take the broncs over in back of the Brock House. We'll set Herne up on that side of the street, and we'll be going out that way—if we go anywhere." Selby departed whistling, and Renner turned to Blue. "You still got that Henry here, Ben?"

Benny dug his sixteen-shot Henry out of the closet, and inspected it with care. "Clean and oiled, Mart, and here's some shells." He handed over the rifle and a box of .44-40 rimfire cartridges. "Ain't so accurate any more, but for short quick work you can't beat it."

Renner tried the action and loaded the weapon. "I'll cover the street and square from the awning out front."

Selby came back and said: "Street's clearin', riders and rigs pullin' out, but Mill Iron's still hangin' on. Mostly downstairs here. Set 'em up, barkeep."

"Set 'em up yourself, Hildy," said Benny Blue.

"What did you call him?" Renner asked. "Been wondering if he had a first name."

Selby grinned and flushed. "Name enough for all three of us. Hildebrand." He made two words of it, while Benny snickered at him.

"Hildebrand Selby," said Renner. "That's real distinguished. . . . Well, it's about time to make our move, boys. This is the way I've got it figured. I'll keep the bunch off your backs—if it works out right." He went on to outline the simple plan in detail.

16

IN THE RENNER home at the northeastern edge of Brandvil, the lamplit air was charged with tension and ill-feeling, as Cynthia supervised the packing operations of two distraught maids

and Dake Tirone paced about the luxurious second-floor chambers with restless impatience.

"You don't have to take everything you own," Tirone growled.

"I'll take what I please!" Cynthia flared back. "I'm not leaving all my things for that little dance-hall slut of Martin Renner's!"

"Be sensible, for once. We aren't running away. I prefer to have you at the ranch, that's all."

"Just the same it's running. And once you start you never stop. *You* ought to know that, Dake! I never supposed one man could do this to you, though."

Tirone gestured angrily. "Sometimes it's necessary to use reason and judgment."

Cynthia regarded him with scorn, her golden head high and her blue eyes flashing. "You were top dog until that Renner boy came back. It didn't take him long to cut the great Tirone down to size!"

Tirone laughed. "You didn't accomplish much with him yourself."

"What did you expect *me* to do? Drag him off to bed?"

"I imagine you tried to," Tirone said caustically.

"Might have been interesting, at that. He's all man, anyway."

Tirone lifted a weary hand. "Let's not quarrel. Things will come our way, once I take a personal part in this business. My mistake was in delegating authority. Everyone I relied on bungled. Renner should have been dead a dozen times. But I might've known I'd have to do it myself."

"Why do I have to move out, if you're going to handle everything?"

"Because they've got Herne and he'll talk. And they'll be coming after you."

Cynthia laughed mockingly. "You've got an army in town, and still we have to run. Can't Mill Iron stop three men?"

"I've got a crew but how many are any good with a gun? Prager and Mulcahy—and Tansill. Just those three."

"That should be enough," Cynthia said, calmer now. "But I guess it isn't. . . . Go downstairs and have a drink, Dake. I'll be down in a few minutes." She smiled and kissed him, and Tirone left the room.

Downstairs, Tirone looked at the liquor cabinet but did not approach it. He didn't want a drink, and the cigar he was smoking had turned rank. He threw it into the dead ashes of the fireplace, and walked out the front door. The spring night was mellow and fragrant, the sky aglitter with stars.

The custom-built Concord coach that had been Rawhide Renner's stood by the stable with four horses harnessed in. Fewster, the driver,

leaned on the front wheel talking to Ushkow, the large deputy. Tirone strode toward them and Fewster straightened off the wheel, and Ushkow turned and touched his hatbrim in an awkward salute.

"Well, what did you learn in town, man?" Tirone asked crisply.

"Nothin' good," Ushkow mumbled. "Sullers is still dead-drunk up in the Castle. Can't find none of the other deputies nowhere. Nobody knows where Jack Herne is."

"Maybe they expect to find him sitting on the bar in the Alhambra!" said Tirone. The polished veneer cracked, as Dake Tirone bared his teeth, revealing the cold wicked savagery underneath that handsome mask. "Sullers is a stupid gutless fool! And his deputies are yellow dogs!"

"Sorry, Mr. Tirone," muttered Ushkow, wagging his shaggy head.

"You can't help it," Tirone said, regaining control and speaking evenly. "You'd better ride the box out to Mill Iron with us. Get yourself a carbine if you haven't got one, Ushkow. Somebody might hit us on the road. You keep your guns handy too, Fewster. We'll be rolling before long—if that woman ever finishes packing." He walked back to the fieldstone house, tall and immaculate and easy-striding on the moonlit lawn.

Fewster gazed after him. "Never saw the boss so riled up. Never heard him talk so rough. Reckon he's a ringtailed heller, if he ever gits a-goin'."

A few minutes later Coke Tansill rode into the yard and swung jauntily down by the stable door, dropping his rein and slouching toward the big house with lazy grace. "Another bad one," Fewster said. "All the way up from Old Mexico to git Mart Renner, they say."

17

MARTIN RENNER, the Henry repeater in hand, lay on the board awning above the sidewalk and entrance to the Alhambra Saloon. It was toward midnight and the town was quieting down. The barroom downstairs was still busy, but the majority of places were closing for the night.

Across the street the lone figure of Black Jack Herne stumbled to and fro on the plank walk before the Brock House, moving like a man in a trance. Young Selby lurked on the shadowy porch of the slumbering hotel, with Herne directly under his watchful eyes, and Benny Blue loitered by the large stone watering-trough at the middle of the square. They had Herne between them, but Black Jack was

beyond hoping or caring what happened to him next.

The batwing doors squealed beneath the awning and boots trampled the slats. Two men, it sounded like. They emerged into view, crossing toward Herne, and Renner smiled with satisfaction. Pat Mulcahy was leading the way, with Cactus Prager lagging to cover his back. Once certain they were alone with Herne, the Mill Iron gunmen resumed their habitual cocky swagger.

Jack Herne faltered to an uncertain halt, and seemed to shrivel in his tracks. Prone on the wooden awning, Renner lined his sights on Prager and waited. It was Dake Tirone all right. Dake and Cynthia. Everything pointed to them. But how could they have deceived Rawhide and Guy Ormond so completely?

Pat Mulcahy, squat and wide in the vague light, laid a heavy hand on Herne's shoulder. Jack screamed thinly and yanked away, making a clumsy break for the hotel driveway, but Mulcahy laughed and clubbed him down with a huge fist, dropping Herne on the board walk.

Selby's clear voice came down from the Brock House veranda then: "Lay off that poor little man, Pat, and look up here."

Mulcahy jerked around and swept into the two-handed draw for which he was noted, but Selby's right hand was faster and flawless in its motion. Burnt orange fire lanced across the porch rail on a down slant, two swift spurts of it roaring and shocking Mulcahy backward.

Reeling and buckling on disjointed legs, Mulcahy shot into the ground with one hand, high and wild with the other. Window glass shattered into brittle rain behind Selby, and his own Colt came down and flamed once more. Mulcahy made a lurching turn and floundered over an empty hitch-rail, hanging on his belly for a moment, and then heaving backward and crashing flat on his shoulders across the slat walk.

Cactus Prager was drawing and lunging forward in midstreet, when Benny Blue's rasping voice reached him: "Looka here, Cactus! This is our number."

Prager shifted his feet and switched his aim, but Benny had stepped clear of the trough and his gun was already leveling off and leaping ablaze. Cactus Prager bent in the middle, sagged to his knees, and pitched forward on his thin chest, his late shot ripping up streamers of dust and screeching off the stone base of the trough.

On the far sidewalk Herne was sitting up, holding his face in his pudgy palms, and Mulcahy was stirring feebly against the gritty planks, while Selby watched from the hotel gallery. In the middle of the square Prager was writhing in the dirt, and Benny Blue had turned to face the Alhambra from the shelter of the horse trough.

Martin Renner came up in a crouch on the

overhang, as men boiled out of the saloon into the street. He lashed a shot over their heads, kicking gravel in front of them, and jacked another shell into the chamber. The rush stopped dead, the startled Mill Iron hands wheeling to stare up at him. Coke Tansill was not among them.

"The show's over, boys," Renner said, the Henry poised and ready. "Fifteen more shots in this and its pointing right down your throats. Get back inside—and stay there!"

They hesitated and muttered, milling about uncertainly until Benny and Selby slashed shots at their heels from behind. Then the men scrambled back into the Alhambra, and Renner knew Benny and the kid would hold them there while he got down. Swinging over the corner of the awning, Renner slid down the post to the ground. A gun blared at him from the doorway, and Renner slammed two shots in through the splintering batwings. Benny and Selby laid their fire on the entrance and smashed the front windows of the Alhambra, driving back and pinning down the men inside.

Backing to the hitch-rack, the Henry under his elbow, Renner tore loose the reins one after another and chased the Mill Iron broncs away westward along Front Street. Bent over he ran for the water trough, with Selby and Blue hammering shots over his head into the saloon. Together Renner and Blue hauled the hard-hit Prager to the other side of the square and down the alley toward the livery stable, with Selby's fire covering both of them now.

But Mill Iron was no longer fighting back from the Alhambra. With Mulcahy and Prager down, and Coke Tansill absent, they had no leadership, and little or no stake and incentive in this war anyway.

Selby came back and took the Henry to stand watch, while Renner and Benny propped Prager against the rear wall of the hotel and began to question him.

"I'm gutshot—damn you!" snarled Prager, sweat beading his vicious tortured features. "Don't bother me—with no fool questions."

"What did you want of Jack Herne?"

"We just—take orders. We don't—know nothin'."

"Where's your boss?"

Prager grinned with protruding teeth. "Courtin' your stepmother—most likely." Even in agony he was sly and mocking.

"He killed Rawhide, didn't he?"

"Naw. He won Mill Iron—in a raffle." Cactus Prager's laugh turned into a retching groan. He doubled convulsively and twisted sideward to the earth.

Renner straightened up. "Come on, boys. It's Dake Tirone, and he's out at the widow's."

In the saddle, the horses rested and lively

beneath them, they threaded through shadow-stippled backyards and alleys toward the northeast corner of the community. The midnight air was cool and damp, refreshing on their sweaty fevered faces, but the taste of gunpowder lingered in their dry mouths.

The walled estate loomed ahead, the stone house dark and silent, and Renner knew they were too late. Lantern light glimmered within the broad arch of the stable, but no one moved about the premises. The scent of roses came on the breeze, and Renner glanced at the gateway in which Wolf Leiken had fallen. . . . The ones Renner wanted were still alive: Dake Tirone, for his father, and Coke Tansill, for Glenway.

They dismounted before the stable, and Renner smiled as a long shadow wavered across the floor and an old Negro stood blinking at them. Jubal was tall and stooped, with gray hair and a deep-lined tragic face. He faced them in drowsy defiance until his vision cleared enough to recognize Renner. Then his smile was wonderful to see.

"Mister Mart hisself! I heard you was back, wondered if you was ever comin' to see old Jube. I knowed you'd come back some day. Things ain't so good here since Mister Rawhide gone. This bright-haired woman and her man takin' over, high-and-mighty-like. . . . I'm sure happy to welcome you home, Mister Mart."

Renner shook hands with the old man. "Meant to get around sooner, Jubal. Where are the folks tonight?"

"Lit out for the ranch, I reckon, just a while back. They don't say where they go, but it's likely Mill Iron."

"Who went, Jubal?"

"The woman and man in the coach. Fewster drivin' it, and a big lawman with a funny name ridin' on top with him."

Selby asked: "Ushkow?"

"That's him. Four hosses, Mister Mart. Good fast ones."

Renner smiled warmly at him. "Thanks, Jubal. We're going after them. I'll see you again, as soon as I get the time."

"You do that, Mister Mart," beamed Jubal. "Sure glad to see my last boy again."

Starting to turn away, Renner whirled back with a sudden thought. "Jubal, what did you do with that thousand dollars Rawhide left you?"

Jubal wagged his head sadly. "I never got it, Mister Mart."

"You never did?" Renner's astonishment was genuine. "I don't understand that, Jube. Dad always said you were getting a thousand."

"Don't matter much, at my age," Jubal said. "But I sure hope you get what's comin' to you, Mister Mart."

Renner patted his bent shoulder. "Maybe we'll both get ours, Jube."

They mounted and rode out, and Benny Blue pulled his grulla over beside Renner's bay. "You thinkin' what I'm thinkin', Marty?"

"I'm thinking anyway, Benny," said Renner, with a bleak grin. "Thinking considerable. He might've cut me off, Ben, but he never would have old Jubal."

18

AFTER SOME debate they decided to try the short cut through Sangaree Swamp, the most direct route to Mill Iron, which lay well north and east of Brandvil. The main road ran straight eastward to the Taloncillos, the wagon road to the ranch branching northeast at the stage depot. Four good horses drawing that light coach would make fast time, especially after Tirone heard that shooting in the square.

It was imperative to intercept Dake Tirone this side of his destination. Even with a Mill Iron force in town, there was a formidable crew left at the spread. Too many guns for three men to charge into. Renner thought their best bet was the swamp.

"It ain't smart, hittin' this swamp," Benny grumbled.

"Maybe not, Ben," said Renner. "But it's our only chance of making up that half-hour or so on them."

Checking landmarks and comparing memories, they picked out a narrow, precarious trail that twisted from one brush-tangled island to the next. The water on either side had a dark, oily sheen under the fog, with salt cedars and scrub pines rising gray-shrouded from its scummed surface. Dead logs were scattered like huge jackstraws, and rotten stumps bulked weirdly among them. It was a nightmare world, eerie and evil in the misted moonlight.

The slow procession filed on, slogging and splashing from hummock to hummock, fighting through brush and skirting logs canted at crazy angles. Two miles of this marsh seemed like twenty. Here and there Renner made false starts, the trail petering out into muck and water, and they were forced to backtrack.

Around them were the faint sounds of swamp creatures stirring in the vaporous darkness, slithering through reeds, swimming in black lagoons, flying through murky space. The call of a loon echoed over watery wastes, as unreal as this whole sunken area.

It was painful and nerve-racking work in the clammy fog, and Renner's eyes ached from the strain. In spots the trees and mist were too dense for the moonlight to penetrate, and he inched forward at the point, keening his senses, trusting to instinct and sheer luck. The swamp

was cold, but men and mounts were sweating freely under the tension. Renner's chest and shoulders felt as wet as his soaked feet, squishing in the muddy boots.

After an eternity of winding and clambering, stumbling and bumping into veiled barriers, they left the windfall behind to plod and slosh through live and standing pines and cedars of stunted size, to break and barrel through thickets that shredded clothing, raked flesh, and set the horses to snorting and pitching.

But at last the terrain was rising and drying underfoot, the pools and oozing muck of the Sangaree in back of them, the stink of it lessening in their nostrils. It was a tremendous relief to climb clear of the swamp, to mount and ride on natural dry and solid earth once more, and to inhale the clean air of open country, with its grass and sagebrush and new-leaved trees.

The horses needed no urging in this wonderful freedom, and they pressed on at a swift clip through open, parklike timber and over rolling prairies. The Little Don stretched before them, a distant ribbon of silver under the moon, and it was somewhere in this section that Rawhide Renner's body had been discovered—two years ago. *Where was I and what was I doing at that time?* Renner wondered. *Working cattle on the Brazos, breaking broncs on the Pecos, or making love to some dark-eyed wench in Laredo?*

They stopped to listen and scan the night landscape, hearing and seeing nothing of the coach, and Renner feared they were too late. Setting the pace on his bay, he led them galloping toward the shallows of the Little Don crossing.

"Should of took the road," Benny said morosely. "They've crossed and gone into Mill Iron by now."

"We'll go in after 'em then," Selby said. "Most of the crew's back in Brandvil."

"Still enough of 'em out here to hold the fort, kid," said Benny.

"That's right, Benny," said Renner glumly. "If they're home we can't hit 'em. We'll have to wait. . . . But *listen!* That sounds like a coach to me. Coming up this side of the Don."

It was the coach, rocking and swaying as it clattered into the long curve toward the river, the four horses running hard under the deft whiplash of Fewster and Ushkow, bulking massive on the seat beside the driver. Below would be Cynthia and Tirone, riding in cushioned comfort within the specially built Concord.

"I'll eat my words—and like 'em," Benny Blue said. "Reckon even I can be wrong once in a while, boys."

They rode down the gradual slope, their mounts flattened out in full stride beneath them. There wasn't time to cut in front of the vehicle,

but they might catch it from behind before it reached the ford. Racing recklessly through trees and brush, they struck the road with a jarring smash and drove on into the dust of the rig, that hung like silvery gauze in the moonbeams.

Exulting in the speed of the chase, the power of the great bay gelding between his thighs, Martin drew his right-hand Colt and smiled tautly into the rushing wind and dirt. As the coach approached the shallows, the pursuers were closing up at a headlong pace. Ushkow started shooting back at them, muzzle lights streaking along the deck, and Dake Tirone opened fire from the carriage window. Bullets whined and droned about the three riders, but they hurtled on with unslackened momentum in the smoking dust.

Renner and his companions held their fire until they were in fair hand-gun range, and the lead horses were splashing into the stream. Renner held to the roadway, while Selby swung off to the left and Benny Blue pulled away to the right, those two fanning out to target on the carriage horses. Ushkow's rifle blasted steadily from the box, and Tirone's fire torched out of the cab. Renner felt the hot suction of passing lead, as he lined shots at the big deputy on top.

In midstream the off-wheel horse trumpeted and went down kicking and thrashing in sheets of spray, the coach bucking and jolting to a sudden stop. The other horses plunged and fought in the traces, cramping the front wheels as they flogged sidewise in snorting panic. Fewster dropped the reins and went for his six-guns, cutting loose with both hands, adding to the hammering racket and the streamers of flame jetting back and forth between the Concord and the shoreline.

From the flanks Selby and Blue lashed the deck with wicked crossfire, and Ushkow jerked as slugs smashed him out of the boot, hurling him into an awkward spread-eagled dive over the wheel. He landed with a resounding splash. The water fountained high about him, and he was lost in the current that foamed and frothed amid dark slimed boulders.

Benny Blue's grulla pitched and cartwheeled in billowing dust on the riverbank to the right, flinging Benny head-first through the air. Renner had a glimpse of the little veteran, head bare and white, bouncing and sprawling beneath the alders and cottonwoods down there.

Swinging from the saddle and stalking forward on foot, Renner joined Selby in laying gunfire upon the driver. Fewster fell to his knees on the seat, reared up and toppled screaming backward over the dash and down under the churning hoofs of his team. Alive by some miracle, Fewster floated free and scrambled frantically for the far shore, wading and crawling through the water. Renner had a bead on him

but did not trigger, letting Fewster creep weakly out into cover on the other side of the river.

Then Selby was down, a shot from the carriage lifting him from the leather and spilling him into a clump of buckbrush, the black horse running free and riderless under the salt cedars and willows.

Renner's hammer clicked on a spent shell. As he lunged behind a rock to reload, a bullet from Tirone slashed stone dust across his cheek. Two men on either side were down and out of the fight. It was between Renner and Tirone, now. His .44 ready again, the other one untouched in the sheath on his left leg, Renner hugged the boulder and waited with cold fury. Hatred was a savage tide in his bloodstream.

Benny had fallen like a dead man, and Selby must be hit hard, perhaps done for or dying. "Come on out, Tirone!" yelled Renner hoarsely. "Come out, you slick, slippery coyote!"

"I'm out of shells," Tirone called back. "I have no choice. Don't shoot! I'm coming out empty-handed."

He opened the door and stepped casually into knee-deep water, facing the bank with hands hanging empty at his sides. "What in God's Name is the meaning of this, Renner?" demanded Dake Tirone. "Have you gone insane?"

Renner rose from the rock and walked forward, holstering his Colt in hope that it might tempt Tirone to draw on him. "You killed my father, Tirone," he said, soft and deadly. "Now I'm going to kill you."

"You're mistaken, boy. Your father was my friend. I never could have harmed him."

"Who did it, then?"

"If I knew, Martin, that man would answer to me."

"You're lying in your teeth, Tirone. Crawling to save your miserable life. Go for your gun like a man!"

Dake Tirone smiled, still suave and poised and utterly fearless. "My guns are empty. I have no more shells. I don't crawl, Martin, for you or anyone else in the world. But I'm glad I don't have to kill you."

"I'll furnish the gun." Renner tapped his left-hand weapon. "You aren't snaking out of this, mister. You're going to die here."

Tirone shook his head. "I won't accept your gun, Martin. I don't want to kill you, boy. And you can't shoot a defenseless man—can you?" He smiled dimly, standing straight, calm and relaxed, the moon-gilded water swirling about his tailored trousers.

Renner sighed in weary disgust. "All right, get your woman out of there and come on in."

Lead sang and seared Renner's upper right arm, as a small-calibered pistol cracked spitefully and flame tongued from the door of the coach. Tirone's hand was blurring across his chest to the

shoulder-holster, and freeing his short-barreled revolver with catlike quickness.

Stunned by that sneak shot from Cynthia, Martin Renner recovered and reacted with fluid speed, lifting the big Colt from its leather sheath in a sharp arc, thumb and trigger finger working in perfect coordination, the gun kicking up hard with the blazing explosion.

The muzzle blasts came together and met blindingly above the rippled sheen of the Little Don. The reports blended into one terrific roar, beating upon the eardrums. Renner felt the scorching breath of a bullet, and saw Tirone stiffen and turn with the impact of the .44 slug, twist and lean his bowed head against a varnished panel of the carriage. Cynthia shrieked from the interior, and Tirone stood propped there, stark and arched, head on the wood and arms dangling.

Renner brought his barrel back into line and thumbed the hammer once more, the Colt jumping in his large firm hand. Dake Tirone heaved erect and away from the coach, then fell backward into the water.

"Throw that gun out, woman, or you get it too!" Renner ordered.

Cynthia cast her pistol into the stream, and collapsed sobbing inside the Concord.

Renner ploughed into the water to catch Tirone under the arms and haul him ashore. Drenched and broken and bleeding, he sprawled there in the sand and cattails, a feeble spark of life yet left in him. Renner bent over him.

"Not me," Tirone moaned, staring straight up at Renner.

"You were in on it," Renner said.

"Yes, but—I didn't—not me," he panted, with the final breath in him. "It was—" His lips framed a name that he could not utter. The name that Mart Renner had dreaded to hear.

Dake Tirone shuddered and died with that unspoken name on his lips, leaving Renner chilled and hollow, sick and desolate enough to lay down and die beside him. . . .

He carried Cynthia in from the coach and left her on the bank. "Did Dake tell you?" she cried emptily. "Do you know—now?"

Renner nodded dully. "I guess I knew—before. But I didn't want to believe it."

"Why did you have to kill him?"

Renner laughed harshly. "You both tried to kill me. You were both involved in Rawhide's death, even if you didn't pull the trigger."

He looked across the river and saw Fewster hobbling along the moon-whitened road to Mill Iron. Ushkow's body had washed downstream somewhere. It was just as well to be rid of them both.

In the brush above, Renner was thankful to find Selby alive but unconscious, with a bullet hole in his shoulder. After washing and bandag-

ing the wound, he left the boy at the roadside and walked down the shoreline in search of Benny Blue, afraid that he might find him dead. But Benny was just coming to, sitting up and snarling curses as he cradled his broken left arm. The grulla had been killed in under him, and the fall had knocked Benny out.

"Is the kid all right, Mart?" he asked, getting to his feet.

"He will be, Ben. Got a slug through the shoulder."

"We make a clean sweep, son?"

"Fewster's heading home, wounded. Ushkow and Tirone are dead."

"Tirone do any confessin', Mart?"

Renner nodded. "A little. He was in on it, Benny. But he didn't do the killing." Mart started uncinching the double-rigged saddle from the dead horse.

Benny shook his silvery head mournfully. "Afraid of that, son. Felt it comin', I guess. Reckon you did too."

"It don't make it any easier to take—or understand," Martin Renner said. "But I began to know when Jubal told me he never got that thousand..."

"Money," Benny Blue said, and spat tobacco juice. "Too much of it corrupts a man. Even a good man, sometimes... Guy Ormond was probably hit hard when things went to hell back in the financial panic of '73."

They walked upstream, Renner lugging the saddle gear, to where the wounded Selby and the weeping Cynthia were waiting, with the body of Tirone on the beach near-by. Benny grumbled: "Must be gettin' old and brittle to bust a damn arm fallin' off a horse. I'm goin' to miss that blue roan, Marty."

"If we don't get shot or hung in Brandvil," said Renner, "you might wind up with a whole new string of horses, Ben."

Renner waded to midstream and cut the dead horse out of the traces. Straightening out the other three, he backed them and the coach ashore, and turned them around to head for town. Mounting his bay, Renner caught up Selby's black, removed the saddle and hitched him into the off-wheel position. Then, with one-armed assistance from Benny, he hoisted Tirone's body and the two saddles to the top and lashed them down on the deck.

His bay tied to the rear of the Concord, Renner lifted Selby gently inside and laid him on the front seat, leaving the back for Cynthia and Benny Blue. With the loose guns gathered and inside under Benny's care, Renner climbed to the box and started the horses and rig rolling down the road.

They took a southwesterly course toward the Dondrino, the main highway and Brandvil—and whatever fate awaited them there. Behind were

Ushkow's drowned corpse, two dead horses, and Fewster dragging himself homeward to Mill Iron. Ahead might be almost anything, but Mart Renner was too tired to care much.

I have killed three men here—Wolf Leiken and Mule Garay and Dake Tirone, he brooded morbidly. And I must kill one more—or two. And I haven't the stomach or the heart or the will left for it.

19

IT WAS LONELY on the topside in the waning night, with only the body of Dake Tirone strapped on the deck at his back for company, and strange thoughts flickered through Renner's mind in a disorderly and haunting sequence, involving the dead as well as the living.

He was swimming again with Doak in their dammed-up pool in the Little Don. . . . He saw Rawhide lifting him onto his first pony, a pinto. . . . Fishing with Guy Ormond, and he could smell the frying trout mixed with woodsmoke and pine needles, and he thought Guy looked like General Robert E. Lee. . . . He was sick in bed, with Doc Seabrey sitting there telling him marvelous stories. . . . He watched Sam Derry work in the shop that smelled cleanly of oiled steel. . . . Benny Blue showed him how to work patiently in gentling a bronco. . . . He was lying with Emily Hale in a summer meadow, with a breeze rippling the tall grass, and it was like being pleasantly drowned in a clear sunny sea of green-gold. . . . Stalking wild horses with Glenway in the beautiful Palo Duro Canyon, north of the Staked Plains of Texas. . . .

Now they reached the darkened log stage-station and swung westward on the main thoroughfare. Renner recalled the afternoon of his arrival here, after the coyote dun Spanish had been shot in Red Gap. It seemed months or years ago instead of a week—or was it eight days, now? So much had happened in that brief span of time.

Four of us five were passengers in the stage coach that first day, Renner reflected wonderingly. All of us except Benny were there. Dake Tirone was alive, charming and debonair, and now he's dead. Cynthia was the lovely gracious lady of means, and now she's broken in more ways than one. Young Selby was passed-out drunk then, and tonight he is wounded and unconscious. And I was a drifting rider without a horse, coming home to see a father who'd been dead two years. And now I'm a killer, with still more killing to do.

Brandvil was pretty well cleaned up, but Rawhide's murderer was still there, and the worst of the job yet to be done. Martin Renner hated

to think of lifting a gun against Guy Ormond, although he was positive of the banker's guilt.

He wished the law would take care of Guy, but it was too much to hope that Abel Sullers would ever take action against such a prominent citizen. Abe never arrested anybody but drunken cowhands and saddle tramps. That's why men like Mart Renner had to take the law into their own hands. And so become known as outlaws.

By the time they pulled into town, Sullers would probably have a posse out to jail or lynch them. The prospect was more annoying than alarming to Renner, in his present state of mind. He wanted to settle with Ormond, get it over quick, and then forget the whole brutal business.

Now he saw everything with aching clarity, at last. It had been Guy Ormond all the time, and the offer of a share of Cynthia's estate had been an attempt to buy Renner off and get him out of Brandvil at once. For Guy Ormond had altered Rawhide's will, to make Cynthia and Tirone and himself the benefactors. With Jack Herne and his gunmen, and perhaps Wolf Leiken, cut in for minor splits. And Martin Renner left out altogether.

But you made a mistake, Guy, when you chiseled a paltry thousand off old Jubal. I knew then, but I wouldn't admit it—even to myself.

It was still a hard thing to swallow and digest, enough to sour Renner on all life and humanity and the world at large. Who could you trust, if a lifelong friend and partner like Guy Ormond turned false, treacherous, and rotten to the core?

Renner smiled gravely, the answer occurring instantly to him. He could trust the two men below, old Benny Blue and young Hildebrand Selby, all the way from hell to breakfast. Public opinion might term them a broken-down broncpeeler turned bartender, and a worthless devil-may-care drunkard, but Renner knew far better. They'd do to ride the river with. They didn't come any better than Benny and the kid.

The moon had set and the early morning hours were black, the Dondrino River a misty thread on the left, the road a dim gray ribbon ahead, the horses blurred bobbing shapes under Renner's heavy eyes. He was tired, drained of emotion, his anger and hatred spent; too weary to hold any strong feeling against Ormond, or to take much interest in the task confronting him this morning.

The panic of 1873 must have wiped out Guy's investments. So he turned on my father, turned to murder. Guy probably did the long-range shooting, he always liked those old Sharps, and Tirone fired the cover-up shot with Rawhide's .44 . . . The filthy skunks. The dirty sneaking filthy skunks.

Renner swayed on the wide seat, the reins in his numb hands, hearing as from a distance

the hoofbeats and harness jingle, the creak of wood and leather, rattling wheels and grinding axles. His feet were damp and cold, and his bones ached from weariness and the jolting of the box. He felt old and uncomfortable, bitter and disgusted, worn to exhaustion.

Renner wanted a good long drink and a cigarette, the comfort of Emily Hale's arms and lips. A warm dry place to sleep in, sleep for a week. And awake to find Em there—every morning for the rest of his life. . . .

Renner wondered if old Rawhide had any way of knowing what his boy had done here in the Dondrino, and how the old man would feel about it if he could know. Would he look at his son with respect instead of contempt? Would he shake hands and say: "You're all right, boy. You did a good job, and I'm proud of you . . .?"

Without his father's approval it all seemed meaningless and futile. Even the fact that he might become the owner of Mill Iron now, and all the rest of the property and money—if he stayed alive and out of prison.

"Why, I'm liable to be a rich man," Renner mused. "If I don't get to be a dead one first . . ." Then he laughed at himself, thinking: Don't spend it all before you get it, boy. Right now you don't even own a horse. And you're wanted for three killings, and probably charged with several more.

The dark was fading, the sky slowly graying, and a few lights still winked palely in the town ahead. White vapors shrouded the river, hazing its marginal cottonwoods and willows. Renner looked back and watched the eastern horizon take on streaks of color from the sun, as it rose behind the Talconcillos. The colors brightened from lemon to gold and pink to scarlet, as the invisible sun climbed nearer the skyline of peaks. A wilderness of clouds was stained with blues and purples, and amber and crimson hues. Dew glistened on grass and sagebrush, and cattle lowed in the distance.

Another day was on the verge of dawning, as Renner took the Concord into Brandvil and glanced at the whitewashed brick house of Guy Ormond on its rise at the southeastern rim of town. He wondered if Guy was sleeping sound and peaceful, or keeping a lone vigil and waiting for the death that he must know would be coming soon?

Renner turned his team into the driveway beside Doc Seabrey's large frame house. Climbing stiffly down, Renner reached inside and hauled Selby out with care, while Benny Blue roused Cynthia and brought her along after Renner and his burden, holding his broken left arm to his body. Selby seemed to have grown a lot heavier since Renner had last lifted him, and Martin set his teeth against the strain as he labored toward the side entrance.

Doc Seabrey opened the door, eyes sunken and bloodshot in a gaunt, haggard face. With great gentle hands he helped Renner carry Selby to the operating table, which looked as if it had been occupied most of the night.

"You're bringing me a lot of business, Martin," said Seabrey, as they shook hands. "And Undertaker Voorhees more, I presume . . . I think I've saved the lives of Cactus Prager and Pat Mulcahy—somewhat against my better judgment. Emily rendered excellent assistance and is sleeping now."

"This lady'll probably need something to make her sleep, Doc," said Renner.

Cynthia meekly took her sleeping potion, and went on to the room designated by the doctor. She no longer seemed to know or care what she did or where she was.

Seabrey glanced at Blue. "Well, you're still walking, Ben."

"Sure, I'm tougher than these young sprouts, Doc," said Benny, with his homely grin. "Tend to the kid there. All I got's a busted wing."

"There's a Federal marshal in town, Mart," said Seabrey, cutting away Selby's shirt and the blood-soaked bandage.

Renner groaned. "That's all we need, Doc!"

"You may be glad to see him, Mart," said Seabrey, working over the unconscious wounded boy with swift precision. "The kid's lucky, a nice clean hole here. . . . How many did you kill?"

"Tirone and Ushkow."

Seabrey smiled. "Casualties are lighter than I expected."

"There'll be more," Renner murmured dryly. "One more, at least."

"About this marshal, Doc?" prodded Benny.

"Name of Kolloway," said the doctor. "Seems like a good man. Here to investigate Black Jack Herne's outfit—and the Renner estate. Said it looked as if someone was doing all his work, cleaning house ahead of him."

Renner sighed with relief. "Maybe he's all right then. Maybe he'll keep Sullers off our necks."

"He found Sullers drunk in the Crystal Castle," said Seabrey, with a tired smile, "with some señorita there. Kolloway does not hold Abe in high esteem, if that's any comfort to you, Mart."

"About time they sent that marshal in here," Benny grumbled. "If he'd waited another day he wouldn't had one damn thing to do in the Dondrino. As it is, he ain't got much."

"Mart, you'd better look Kolloway up," Seabrey suggested. "In Sullers' office at the jailhouse, I believe."

"All right, Doc," said Renner. "Take good care of the boys."

"Anxious to set that arm for Benny. He's

insulted me rather often in the past. It'll be a fine chance to even the score."

Benny Blue snorted. "Where the hell do you hide your liquor, Doc? A man in pain like I am is entitled to some consideration, even from a butcher like you."

Seabrey pointed to a cabinet. "Don't drink it all, now, Benny. The kid here's going to need some of that whiskey."

20

AFTER CARING for his bay gelding in Doc's barn, Martin Renner dumped the saddle gear and guns from the coach and drove it back through the empty square toward Rawhide's town house. The sun was coming up red as blood over the Talconcillos, and the world was brighter and warmer again. Renner felt wide-awake and better, his muscles loosened from activity and his mind clear and sharp. He didn't know what to do with Tirone's body, and decided to leave it there on the deck. Perhaps Marshal Kolloway would relieve him of the job of taking Guy Ormond, but something told Renner that Guy would not be taken alive.

Renner left the team and coach in front of the barn, knowing that old Jubal would be out soon to unharness and stable the horses, and the sight of Tirone dead wouldn't make the old Negro too unhappy. You'll get your thousand after all, Jubal, he thought, starting back toward the business district.

The rising sun flooded east-west streets and alleys with red-gold light, and spread blue and lavender shadows beyond western walls. Roosters crowed and dogs barked, and smoke began to spiral up from the chimneys of Brandvil.

Things were shaping up better than Renner had anticipated. Thanks to the presence of a U. S. Marshal, Renner might be on the side of the law instead of a fugitive from justice.

It was heartening to think of men like Doc Seabrey and Benny Blue and young Selby. In spite of the Tirones and Hernes and Ormonds, there were some mighty fine men in this country. Enough of them to prevail, in the long run, over evil elements.

Renner would go to the jailhouse and meet Kolloway, and they'd go after Guy Ormond and bring this to an end. Mill Iron is mine, he thought, with mild wonder. Those people had no honest claim to it. I should have known Rawhide wouldn't turn against his own son—even a runaway blacksheep son like I was.

Turning the corner into the central plaza, Renner halted starkly in his tracks. All the brightness went out of the morning, and the good buoyant feeling seeped out of him. Coke

Tansill was lounging there against the upright of a wooden overhang, an insolent grin on his sharp face, hair glinting golden under the rakish hat. Lazily he pushed off from the post and stood slouched and easy, smiling at Renner.

"You want it now, Coke?" asked Renner, with icy restrained anger. He had almost forgotten Tansill in the last few hours, and it irked him to run into the man at this stage of the game.

"I don't know, Mart," drawled Tansill. "Wasn't that Tirone's body you had on top of the coach?"

"It was."

"So Tirone's dead? If I kill you now I won't be able to collect for it. Maybe I'll let you live, Mart."

"Make your move, or get out," Renner said. "I've got things to do, Coke."

"Busy man, ain't you?" Tansill drawled. "But don't rush me, Mart. This takes some thinkin'."

"Thinking, hell! Let's get this done with. It's been waiting quite a while."

"Kinda hate to do it. Always liked you, in a way, Mart. And now that you ain't worth a thousand dollars to me dead, I don't hardly know."

"Draw or get out!" Renner said, with soft intensity.

Tansill slowly shook his head. "Once I wanted you real bad. Now I've kinda lost that feelin'. What happened down in Mexico don't seem so important any more."

"You talk too much, Coke. Fill your hand, or move out of this valley."

"You're tough, Mart," drawled Tansill. "Turned into a real killer. Kinda too bad . . . But you can't run me out of the country."

"I'll kill you then," Renner said. "Go for your gun, Coke."

He was ready, and Tansill wasn't quite certain. It gave Renner a slight edge. He recalled what Glenway had told him: "Be sure, know what you're going to do—and do it!" It wasn't how fast a man was, it was how his nerve and confidence held up. After practice the draw was automatic, the gun a part of you.

"Get to it, Coke," said Renner, ruthless and vicious as never before, his eyes bitter green now.

Coke Tansill sighed. "If you insist, Mart, there's no way out of it." He was smiling as his hand flicked into motion.

But Renner was ahead of him, swifter and surer than he'd ever been, far enough ahead to swerve his barrel left and let go at Tansill's gun arm, the flame blasting out and the .44 jerking up against his palm. Tansill's pistol flew clear, slithering in the dirt, and his body spun halfway around with the smashing force of the slug. Wheeling back to face Renner, his right arm shattered and dripping red as it dangled, Tansill

stood shocked and incredulous, left hand poised near the weapon on that thigh.

"You ain't that good, Mart," said Coke Tansill, in mild complaint.

"I was this time, Coke," said Renner. "You reaching for the other one?"

Tansill considered and shook his blond head. "What the hell? I know when I'm licked, Mart. But I can't figure you beatin' me that far, boy."

Renner stepped in and lifted the left-hand gun from Tansill's holster, sheathing his own Colt and picking up the one on the ground. "You know Doc Seabrey's beyond the square? Get along over there and let Doc fix up that arm, Coke."

"Wasn't primed for this," mumbled Tansill, pale and sick from shock. "Didn't have that feelin' you got to have. . . . Nice of you to go for my arm. But dangerous, Mart. You could get yourself killed doin' that."

"Not today, Coke," said Martin Renner. "I've got something to do here. I guess nobody could keep me from it."

Renner halted before the jail, and Tansill went wavering on toward the doctor's, left hand clasped to his bleeding right arm.

"Your guns'll be in the sheriff's office, Coke," called Renner.

"Much obliged, Mart," said Tansill, still dazed and unbelieving and wagging his bent tawny head.

In the door of the sheriff's office a thin whip-like man in a dusty black suit was waiting. He had bright eyes in an angular face, a severe mouth and rocklike jaw. The cigar he was smoking looked enormous in his gaunt skeletal features. Renner knew it was Kolloway before he saw the gold badge glittering on the dark vest.

"He one of them?" The marshal nodded after Tansill.

"Worked for Mill Iron, but this was personal," Renner said.

Kolloway went back to his chair, drank from a large tin cup of coffee and leaned back with his boots on Sullers' desk. "You're Martin Renner? Have a seat there." Renner laid Tansill's matched guns on the desk and sat down in front of it, and Kolloway went on: "You killed them all now?"

"The big one's still alive."

"Let's take him alive," Kolloway suggested dryly. "Like to have one that can do some talking."

Renner inclined his copper-streaked head. "I'm all for that."

"I suppose you got Tirone?"

Renner nodded another inch.

"You've cut quite a swath here, son," Kolloway said. "But so far as I can see you haven't killed anyone who didn't fully deserve to die. I

have warrants for Tirone, Mrs. Renner, Herne and his gunmen. Herne's out back in a cell, now. The others, except for the woman, are dead. I also have a warrant for Guy Ormond. I imagine he's the big one you referred to?"

"He's the one," Renner said. "Where's Sheriff Sullers?"

"Well, I sent him home for the time being." Kolloway smiled. "He was in bad shape. I think Sullers will leave the Dondrino—if he doesn't land in jail himself. . . . Well, there's no doubt that you're the legal heir to Mill Iron."

Renner was silent, shaping up a cigarette.

Kolloway said: "Suppose you tell me your whole story, Renner, and then we'll call on Mr. Guy Ormond. We don't approve of private citizens enforcing the law at gunpoint, as a general rule. But in a situation like this, it might have been justifiable. After you tell me about it, I'll know for sure."

"We had to fight—and kill. Or get killed ourselves."

"What brought Blue and Selby into it?"

"They're my friends, Marshal," said Renner simply.

Kolloway nodded understandingly. "Dr. Seabrey's your friend too. His detailed report prompted the investigation we have just completed."

"Find out anything about the rustling?"

"Considerable, son," Kolloway said, puffing on the big cigar. "Mill Iron was running off the stock, and Herne had a crew up north altering brands and driving cattle into Colorado to sell there."

"About what we figured," Renner said. "But we couldn't get to 'em."

Kolloway smiled gravely. "Maybe you boys had enough to do, without running down all the rustlers in Utah Territory. . . . Well, let's have the story, Renner. Don't think I'll be able to bring any charges against you—outside of usurping the legal duties of local and Federal authorities. Matter of fact, you and your pardners probably ought to get a good big bounty."

21

AN HOUR LATER, after breakfast in the Brock House, Marshal Kolloway and Martin Renner were walking out toward the home of Guy Ormond, at the southeast perimeter of the community. The word had got around, as soon as Brandvil awakened that morning, and a curious crowd trailed the marshal and Renner at a respectful distance, despite Kolloway's commands to disperse and go home.

The town was humming with news, rumors, and excitement: Dake Tirone and Ushkow

were dead, and Fewster was wounded at Mill Iron. . . . Doc Seabrey's private hospital was filled with gunshot cases—Mulcahy and Prager and Tansill on one side, Benny Blue and young Selby from the other. . . . Black Jack Herne was in jail, and a Federal marshal was on his way to arrest Guy Ormond, the highly respected banker. . . . Rawhide Renner's death two years back had been murder instead of suicide, and Mart Renner was the rightful owner of Mill Iron and the rest of his father's property. . . . Tirone and Herne had been behind all the cattle stealing in the region. . . . Cynthia Renner had gone out of her head when Mart shot Tirone to death, and she was being kept under drugs at the doctor's. . . . Sheriff Abel Sullers was in total disgrace, and likely to end up behind bars. . . . The Crystal Castle was shut down tight, padlocked by Federal law.

Martin Renner, towering rawboned and battlegrimmed above the neat wire-thin Kolloway, felt oddly light-headed and giddy. He was sweating as he walked, and in spite of the food he'd eaten there was a hollow gnawing sickness under his belt. Renner saw things to the finest detail, yet none of them seemed real or normal. A sense of unreality clothed everything about him, and he was like a man striving vainly to awake from a bad dream.

It was a relief to know that Emily Hale was sound asleep at Doc Seabrey's, and that Selby and Benny were there under the doctor's care. Also that Coke Tansill wouldn't be coming at him with a gun. But Renner dreaded what lay before them at the Ormond house. The only consolation was that Guy had no family to drag down with him.

The slanting light of the early sun was still tinged with crimson, and the morning shadows were cool blue and delicate lavender. The cottonwoods along the way stood out sharply in Renner's vision, even to the tiny veins of the long narrow leaves. When he lowered his burning eyes, Renner was aware of vari-colored pebbles in the gravel, weathered planks in the walk, separate stalks of bleached grass. He saw everything in infinite detail, yet none of it looked natural, nothing had the substance of reality.

His mouth was parched, his throat ached tautly, and a peculiar numbness gripped his limbs. The scent of gunpowder would never clear from his head. His scalp crawled under the hat, and chilling flickers traced his spinal column. The measured tread of their boots sounded faint and far away, and behind them was the slow shuffle and hushed murmur of the crowd that persisted in following.

"You all right, Martin?" asked Kolloway.

"Sure, I'm fine."

"You don't have to come on this one. You've done more than your share."

"I want to," Renner said. "I've got to. Maybe I can talk to him."

"Will he fight?"

"I'm afraid so, Marshal."

"I should handle this myself—alone," Kolloway said.

"Hate to have him killed," said Renner. "He was a good man, a good friend—once."

The house was in sight now, with the fiery gold ball of the sun above it, facing the town, the back porch overlooking the Dondrino River. It was compactly built of whitewashed brick on a natural terrace, with a white picket fence about the spacious sloping yard. A large home for a bachelor, the interior pleasant and serene with fine furniture, good books, old paintings, all the essentials for cultured, gracious living . . . The home of a thief and a murderer? Renner was still unable completely to accept this. It was still somehow possible that Guy would have some explanation, clear himself in some convincing manner.

The gate in the picket fence creaked as it swung open under Renner's reluctant hand. A long gravel walk lined with redstone boulders rose gradually before them to the distinctive front entrance. Renner remembered many happy times in this house, lavish dinners, quiet evenings by the fireplace, listening to Guy's stories or reading his books. Often it had seemed more like home than either Rawhide's town house or Mill Iron.

The door opened and Guy Ormond came out. And Renner knew then it was true beyond any doubt. For Guy carried a long heavy rifle, a .56 Sharps buffalo gun, the weapon that had killed Rawhide out by the Sangaree Swamp, and Martin's coyote dun in the passage of Red Gap.

His gray head bare, his beard trimmed to perfection, Guy Ormond looked as dignified, noble, and distinguished as ever.

"Don't come any closer, gentlemen," he said calmly, raising the rifle. And Renner was surprised to find it aimed more at Kolloway than at him. There was an awed murmur from the spectators scattered in the background, and Renner felt as sorry for Guy Ormond then as he ever had felt for any human being.

"We'd better pull out, Mart, and do this a little differently," Kolloway suggested easily.

"You hang back, Marshal," said Renner. "I want to get it over with. I got a hunch I can do it—by myself. Without using a gun."

"Can't let you risk it, boy."

"You've got to," Renner said quietly. "It's my job. I want to do it—my way. And I'm going to, Marshal."

"That cannon will blow a man in two," Kolloway muttered.

"I can beat him to the trigger—if I have to."

Kolloway shrugged and sighed. "Don't like

it, son, but I guess you're set on it. I'll try to cover you from here, but it's a long shot with a hand-gun."

"Thanks, Marshal. I'll be all right."

There was a hushed silence, the pressure building into unbearable tension, as Mart Renner started pacing deliberately up that long rising pathway, his guns still sheathed . . . walking straight and slow into the gaping muzzle of that Sharps.

"Stop, boy, stop!" cried Ormond, his composure cracking for the first time. "Don't come any farther, Martin."

"Put it down, Guy," Renner said softly. "It's all over. Drop that rifle." He was still climbing, calm and unhurried on the surface, but quivering inside.

"Stop, you damned fool!" Ormond raised the butt to his shoulder and took aim—but Renner went on, slow stride after stride, boots crunching the gravel, long arms swinging loose and clear. Ormond's voice became a hoarse screech: "I'll blow your head off!"

"No, Guy." Renner's tone was kind and gentle, as if he spoke to an unruly child. "You've done enough, Guy. More than you ever meant to." Renner didn't want to kill him, but he would if he had to. Guy's eyes would tell when he was ready to pull the trigger, and Renner would have to draw and hit the dirt as he fired, lightning fast. It would be a close thing. "You've killed enough, Guy," he said.

Suddenly the man's regal features seemed to crumble and disintegrate, his eyes wavering and blurring, the Sharps trembling in his grasp. He lowered the barrel a trifle, shaking his proud gray head.

"Why did you do it, Guy?" asked Renner, still moving leisurely toward him. "How could you do it, Guy? To a man like my father—your best friend?"

Ormond groaned aloud. "I had to, boy. Everything went wrong in 1873. The squeeze was on me. I couldn't face being broke and disgraced . . . But don't try to take me, Mart. Hold it right there!"

These two were alone in the world now. Kolloway and the swelling crowd behind him had ceased to exist.

"Put down the gun, Guy," said Renner, with quiet pleading insistence. "We don't want to shoot you, Guy. And you don't want to kill—any more."

"Why not, boy? What have I got to lose now?" A spasm distorted the bearded face, and Guy Ormond snapped the rifle to his shoulder again. The onlookers stopped breathing, and Renner was chilled by the nearness of death, ready to draw and dive as he triggered. Behind and below at the foot of the path, Marshal Kolloway held his pistol cocked and poised.

The Sharps exploded with a great bellowing boom, the fiery blast passing high over Renner's head as he drew and dropped to the gravel. He was up instantly and holding his fire, as he realized that Guy had shot at the marshal instead of him, and had hit nobody.

Blinded and deafened, Renner strode onward with Colt in hand, blocking the field of fire so that Kolloway had to shoot wide, his bullet crashing through a windowpane beside the entrance.

"No, by God, never!" The words burst from Ormond's throat, and he threw down the old single-shot buffalo gun. Turning and running into the house, he slammed the door shut after him.

Renner sprang forward, driving his legs with desperate power and speed. His shoulder struck the door, scalding where that slug of Cynthia's had creased his upper arm. As his left hand gripped the knob, a muffled report sounded within the brick walls.

Throwing the door open Renner halted on the threshold, stark and staring. Guy Ormond was stretched on the hardwood floor, a revolver at his side, a dark red stain spreading on the fine pleated linen of his white shirt. He was still alive and conscious, his tortured eyes fixed on Renner, but he was a dying man.

"Sorry, boy," he gasped feebly. "God forgive me . . . Send the marshal in. I'll—tell him—everything."

"Wanted to take you alive, Guy," said Renner.

"Better—this way. Good-by—Martin."

"Good-by, Guy."

Renner turned away, choking, and met Kolloway on the porch. "He—he can talk—a little. He asked for you, Marshal. I'll see you in town."

Kolloway nodded and clapped Renner's rangy shoulder. "You're all right, Mart. They don't make 'em any better. Old Rawhide would be mighty proud."

Renner forced a faint smile and went on down the graveled pathway, numb and hollow with exhaustion. The gun was still hanging in his hand. He looked at it, thankful that he hadn't had to use it, and slid the Colt .44 back into the smooth-worn leather.

Maybe it can stay in there now, he thought. Thank God it's over, at last. I never want to use a gun again as long as I live. If there's any fighting to be done, I'll hire somebody like Coke Tansill to do it. Perhaps I'd better keep Coke on at Mill Iron, just in case.

He went through the gate and along the street toward the square, almost unaware of the awed, staring townspeople who made way for him and gazed after him with wonder.

He wanted to get back to Emily Hale with

her tilted, gold-brown eyes and her sweet full lips. Back to little old Benny Blue with his broken arm, and handsome young Hildebrand Selby with his wounded shoulder, and Doc Seabrey himself with that brute face and soft eyes and gentle voice. Renner belonged with them and nobody else.

It seemed a long way with the morning sunshine on his back. The guns dragged heavily on his thighs, and his knees jacked weakly. Renner was swaying and staggering with utter weariness. He hoped his eyes would stay open and his legs hold up, until he got to Doc's place.

Someone had brought the story in already, the story that would become a legend of the Dondrino, and people were watching Martin Renner from the sidewalks, doorways and windows along Front Street and all around the square. Renner wished they wouldn't stare so, but he was too tired to feel anger, resentment, or anything else. Let them look. They used to look at old Rawhide this way. Maybe he'd get used to it, after a while.

A man came out of the Alhambra and pressed a full bottle of whiskey into his hand, and it wasn't until Renner had pulled the cork and taken a swig of the Valley Tan that he recognized Ivy Wingate, the spare, sour-faced owner of the Running W.

"Why thanks, Ivy," said Renner, in surprise. "I sure needed that one." He tried to hand the bottle back, but the rancher waved it away.

"It's yours, Mart," said Wingate. "You sure to God earned it, and a whole hell of a lot more. My hat's off to you, son, and every man in this country owes you his thanks. A lot of folks hereabouts had you down as nothin' but a kill-crazy gungsel. Well, we was wrong. I reckon we'll get along, Mart, when you take over Mill Iron."

"Why sure, Ivy," said Renner. "And thanks again. The boys at Doc's will appreciate this, too."

Martin Renner went on with a little more strength and assurance, the whiskey warming through him and the bottle in his hand. It wasn't far now. Emily Hale would be waiting for him at the doctor's. Benny Blue and Selby and Seabrey were there too. . . . A few drinks and then a good bed and a long sleep. And waking to know that Em was there under the same roof, and would always be with him the rest of his life.

And maybe old Rawhide Renner was watching from somewhere above, with no more contempt in his deep stormy eyes. Looking at Martin Renner with the love and pride of a father for his son, and the respect and liking of one strong man for another.

A door opened up ahead. Emily Hale stood on the front porch of Doc's house. Renner smiled . . . and lengthened his strides in her direction.

—BY ROE RICHMOND

BLUEBOOK'S SEPTEMBER CONTEST MOVIE: BROKEN LANCE

BY PAUL FARON

What would YOU do? ...

... if you could save your father from jail by taking the blame yourself?

A brief answer to that problem can win \$10. Robert Wagner faces it in *Broken Lance* (20th Century-Fox) when his father (*Spencer Tracy—above*) takes the law into his own hands. Tracy's cattle have been dying from drinking water polluted by waste from a copper mine. So he rides all night with his four sons for a showdown fight with the miners. In the course of the battle Tracy's ranch foreman charges up with reinforcements and helps wreck the smelter.

The mine-owners bring Tracy to trial and his lawyer warns that he'll go to jail unless one of his sons takes the blame for the damage.

There's been an undercurrent of rivalry, almost hatred, between Tracy's three sons by his first wife, and Joe, his son by his Indian second wife. This feeling is strongest between the oldest son, Ben (*Richard Widmark*), and Joe (*Robert Wagner*). Their father seems to side with Joe (*above right*). But Tracy has dominated all his sons, working them hard for low pay.

At the crisis the only son who volunteers to save his dad from jail is Joe. He lies and goes to prison in his father's place.

When Joe gets out (*below right*) his father has died and his brothers try to cheat him out of his inheritance. Joe plans revenge on them, and the film rushes to a surprising climax.

Broken Lance gives one answer to: What would you do if you could save your father from jail by taking the blame yourself? Your own reply may win you a cash prize. Write 25 words or less on a postcard, mail before September 30, 1954 to Paul Faron, BLUEBOOK, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. Best answer wins \$10.



Winner of June Contest:
Don Wilson, Timberlake, North Carolina



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